An Exploration of English and Swedish Pre-School Teachers' Perspectives on Their Roles and Values

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the

requirements of the University of Wolverhampton

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

July 2020

Signature

Date……20/07/2020……..

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my ‘A’ team of supervisors, Doctor Brendan Bartram, Professor Tony Bertram and Doctor Martin Needham for all their help, support and guidance. I am also very grateful to ‘The Centre for Research in Early Childhood’ (CREC) and all the staff there for always making me so welcome and giving me a PhD ‘home’. I would not have enjoyed this journey so much without my PhD partner in crime, Helen Lyndon, and also Jenny Worsley who has been selfless with her time to guide me through the final stages. I would like to thank my colleagues at the University of Wolverhampton, my friends and family for always asking me how I am getting on. Finally, I would like to thank my husband Scott and our three boys for keeping me on my toes and ensuring I am a master at multi-tasking while completing my thesis. I love you all dearly.

Abstract

This comparative investigation aims to explore the values of an English and a Swedish pre-school teacher, focusing on their roles and the experiences they provide for three and four-year-old children. Values are beliefs held by individuals to which they attach special worth or priority (Hill, 1991); and this research recognises that values are personalised and shaped by the social, cultural and political contexts in which the teachers are situated and as a prism through which practice is realised. This thesis examines growing international research evidence in the field of early childhood education (ECE) that has shown that high quality early childhood education is linked to teacher qualification and pedagogic approach, which has a significant impact on children's learning outcomes (Sylva *et al.,* 2010). The literature examined affirms that early years practitioners' underlying beliefs and the transmission of values must be scrutinised through critical reflection and made 'explicit' and brought to the surface to transform early years practitioners' practice (Brookfield, 2017). Two 'day in the life of' videos were filmed (in a Swedish and an English pre-school) using polyvocal ethnography (Tobin and Hayashi, 2012) to capture two teachers' multiple 'voices' in an attempt to ascertain their values through ongoing dialogue, telling and retelling of their 'stories' provoked by their reflections on the video footage. The videos provided data which were used to elicit thick, rich reflections. The findings revealed many similarities in the teachers' values, especially regarding relationships, a play-based pedagogy, valuing parents as partners, the layout of the environment and types of resources utilised, valuing the voice and rights of the child alongside the role of the adult in terms of nurturing children's independence,

knowing the children, and modelling. There were more pronounced differences, however, with regard to the teachers' views on how children learn and the role of the adult. It is concluded that these differences are shaped by the underpinning educational policy and the curricula in the teachers' respective countries. This investigation has generated a framework entitled 'situated pedagogy', based on the thinking of Habermas (1987) and Rogoff (2003), which offers early years practitioners the opportunity to make their values more visible through the lens of their daily pedagogical practices, taking into consideration the societal, political and cultural contexts in which they are based.

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Chapter One – Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Research

This chapter provides context to this inquiry and a justification of the aims and scope of the research. It also includes the rationale for how the research questions were devised within a framework of previous research and literature about the values pre-school teachers may hold in terms of pedagogical approaches, their own role and the experiences they provide to enable children to learn and flourish. Finally, this chapter will provide an overview of how the thesis is organised.

1.2 Context of Research

This research aimed to investigate the values of one English pre-school teacher and one Swedish pre-school teacher in relation to their role and the experiences they provided for children aged three to four. According to UNICEF (2019), there is consistent and strong evidence which shows that:

- Brain development is most rapid in the early years of life. When the quality of stimulation, support and nurturance is deficient, child development is seriously affected.
- The effects of early disadvantage on children can be reduced. Early interventions for disadvantaged children lead to improvements in children's survival, health, growth, and cognitive and social development.
- Children who receive assistance in their early years achieve more success at school. As adults they have higher employment and earnings,

better health, and lower levels of welfare dependence and crime rates than those who have not had these early opportunities.

These are useful to consider for the purpose of this research as they highlight the importance of the first five years of a child's life and the impact that their experiences can have on each child's educational success. Vandenbroeck, Urban and Peeters (2016) refer to the number of policies in the European Union over the last two decades connecting early childhood education and care (ECEC) with the EU's, "aiming to transform itself into the world's most competitive and dynamic based economy" (European Council, 2000, in Vandenbroeck, Urban and Peeters, 2016, p.1). However, there is considerable public debate on existing early years services, the curriculum and the quality of these services globally. This has also been reflected in contemporary research and debate across international contexts (File, Mueller and Wisneski, 2012; Lenz Taguchi, 2010, in Wood and Hedges 2016). According to Moyles, Payler and Georgeson (2014, p.14), "There is a continuing dilemma for practitioners in the current climate between doing what we know is essentially 'right' for young children from all backgrounds and conforming to the demands made by government and policy-makers." They also acknowledge the complexity for early years practitioners trying to make sense of all the legislation and policy documents and implement it all in their daily practice. Moyles, Payler and Georgeson (2014, p.14) highlight how imperative it is "for practitioners to remember that they are [n]ot only receivers of but also mediators of policy" and that "[d]uring the interpretation process a policy can take on a different form from what was intended as

practitioners will redefine it to accommodate the narratives of and within the setting" (Clandinin and Connelly, 1996, in Moyles, Payler and Georgeson, 2014, p.14). With this in mind, Wood and Hedges (2016) refer to the continuing 'struggle' over curriculum theory and practice in ECE and assert that "although this has historically focused on different ideologies, theories, and approaches, more recent influences have emanated from policy discourses that operate at national and supranational levels" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2006, in Wood and Hedges, 2016, p.387). Wood and Hedges (2016, p.388) suggest that the nature and position of curriculum content in ECE have remained contentious, in particular "the extent to which young children can and should engage with subject matter, concepts and skills". Wood (2014, in Wood and Hedges 2016, p.389) argues that learning processes have been viewed as more important than either content or outcomes, "with the result that curriculum theory has been the poor relation to child development and pedagogical theories." In contrast, within contemporary policy frameworks, the ECE curriculum document has become the location through which "content, coherence, and control are being articulated, as a means of aligning pre-school and compulsory education policy, and ensuring that children achieve educational and school readiness goals, which, in turn, contribute towards longer term economic and socio-political goals" (Wood and Hedges 2016, p.389). They suggest that this brings into focus critical questions about curriculum content, coherence and control. Wood and Hedges (2016) look at this from two perspectives: firstly, the influence of child development and educational psychology within ECE; and secondly, how contemporary policy

frameworks have selected key aspects from these subjects. Wood and Hedges (2016, p.388) claim that these two positions "embody contrasting ontological assumptions and discourses ... taking a different view of what curriculum comprises in ECE, what informs curriculum decision making and what and whose form of knowledge or content are valued." These positions are significant to this research as they highlight the intersection of and pedagogical dilemma in juxtaposed teachers' values and curriculum guidance and policy in terms of how and what they choose to teach three and four-year-old children.

1.3 The English and Swedish ECE Context

The word 'pre-school' means different things in England and Sweden. For the purpose of this research, I am defining 'pre-school teachers' as individuals who work with children aged three to four. Usually, in both countries, an early years teacher has successfully completed a graduate qualification in early childhood as well as obtaining postgraduate qualified teacher status. In England, provision for three and four year olds can be categorised into three sectors: private, voluntary and independent (PVI) (this includes full day care provision, private nurseries, play groups, stay and play sessions and crèches); state funded (this includes maintained nursery schools and nursery and infant classes in primary schools predominantly led by qualified teachers); and childminders (based in the home setting) (Eurydice, 2020). There is a significant difference in the qualifications of early years practitioners in these different settings, ranging from a level 2 qualification (which consists of one year at college, where students can be as

young as 16, studying a vocational qualification) to level 3 (which consists of two years at college studying a vocational qualification) to qualified teachers who have studied a three year Bachelor's degree at university. There are also two other qualifications: Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) which was introduced in 2006, and Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) from 2014. These were both intended to be equivalent to qualified teacher status (QTS) when working with children from birth to five. However, it quickly became apparent that EYPS and EYTS were not to be accepted as conferring QTS and all the associated benefits, including support during a newly qualified teacher (NQT) year and national pay scales. Generally the PVI sector and childminders have lower level staff qualifications compared to nursery classes and nursery schools. Contrastingly, in Sweden, there are pre-schools (Förskolan) (which include children aged one to five) and these can be grant-aided independent pre-schools or municipal pre-schools. Open pre-school is an alternative option to pre-school and is mainly for stay at home parents and their children; attendance there is voluntary. In Sweden, all pre-school teachers have a teacher training degree from a university, and the provision of several pre-schools in the area is overseen by a teacher (pedagogista) with a higher master's level qualification. There are also teaching assistants who complete a three-year upper secondary vocational training qualification in childcare, enabling them to work as support staff in Swedish pre-schools (Eurydice, 2020).

Research has identified the importance of a highly skilled workforce and, in particular, early years teachers have been shown to make a significant and

positive impact on children's outcomes (Sylva *et al.,* 2010). Munton *et al.* (1995, in Vandenbroeck *et al.,* 2016, p.3) state that "international research evidence has shown that better educated staff are more likely to provide high quality pedagogy and stimulating learning environments, which in turn, foster children's development leading to better learning outcomes." Sylva *et al.* (2010, in Vandenbroeck *et al.,* 2016, p.3), in their research on a variety of pre-schools in England and Sweden, have found that:

> Competent educators nurture children's development by creating rich and stimulating early learning environments by intentionally sustained shared thinking and logical reasoning in social interactions and by valuing children's initiatives for extending their learning opportunities.

It is useful to consider what it means to have a highly skilled early years workforce in the context of this research as it aims to investigate the learning experiences provided by two teachers (one in England and one in Sweden), including their role when interacting with children aged three to four. Many countries, including England and Sweden, have expanded their ECEC services and emphasised the educational potential of this sector through improvements to staff qualifications, curricula and quality assurance processes (Heckman, 2017). However, the value placed upon the educational potential of ECE does vary across countries, as highlighted by Moss and Pence (1994), Pugh and Duffy (2013) and Mathers, Singler and Karemaker (2012), who have looked at international models of early years practice. Studies such as these are useful to draw upon as they compare the learning experiences and opportunities offered to young children as well

as the role of the adult. They also highlight cultural variations in practice, practitioner values, and curriculum guidance and policy that are within the scope of this study. As Heckman (2017, p.53) suggests, "Whilst policymakers have been persuaded that experiences in early childhood have the greatest effect on lifetime outcomes, in many countries governments are yet to invest adequately in the early years workforce."

My interest in comparing an English and Swedish context has evolved not only from literature and research, which have shown differences in philosophy and approaches, but also from my own biography as a pre-school teacher. As Orlowski (2011) says, it is important to acknowledge that a person's experience is central to their positionality, and vice versa. While teaching for seven years in an English school across the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One, I found that the curriculum being delivered was not what I deemed to be 'Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)' (Bredekemp and Copple, 2009, p.2), and this was at odds with my own values regarding what early years practice should be. I was continually made more accountable for children's progress as part of the 'obsession' with a drive to raise educational standards (Lubeck, 2000, in Penn, 2008). I felt that there was also a heavy focus on the core subjects defined within the National Curriculum, rather than those in the early years curriculum, particularly literacy and numeracy, and there was less emphasis placed on children's learning dispositions and individual needs. The 'topic based' approach to the early years curriculum had been replaced by the requirement to teach isolated discrete subjects, which I felt was not a creative and innovative

approach to the curriculum that encourages children to think and use their imagination. I found a gap between rhetoric and my own professional ideology of effective pedagogical practices within English pre-school settings. My experience resonates with the findings of research by Keating, Basford, Hodson and Harnett (2002) on how Reception teachers (in England) were aware that their practice did not truly reflect their own philosophy of what really constitutes effective and developmentally appropriate practice, in particular child-initiated learning experiences.

From my own personal reading and research and observations of practice through informal visits to Swedish pre-schools, I found that Swedish children have very different learning experiences from their English counterparts (OECD, 2012). I felt there were opportunities in their practices which could be shared across both countries, in particular the role of the adult and the learning experiences provided. The Swedish early years curriculum is broadly focused and less prescribed than the English pre-school curricula and teachers are deemed professional enough to raise standards in their classrooms. Although teachers are held accountable, accountability is achieved through dialogue and discussion with experienced colleagues on how they can develop their own practice to enhance children's progress. In Sweden, early childhood education and care is traditionally family oriented and, "rather than specifying any pre-defined knowledge, skills or attitudes that children would require in everyday life, the central aim of social pedagogy has been to empower children as active citizens, so they can act to change their own lives" (Sylva *et al.,* 2010 p.151). Therefore, comparing

the perceptions of an English and Swedish pre-school teacher has the potential to highlight examples of practice within two pre-school settings with different philosophical approaches. Furthermore, in relation to providing a justification of the choice of a comparison between a Swedish and English pre-school, both England and Sweden have also experienced significant ECE policy changes in the last decade (Cohen *et al.,* 2018). Therefore, capturing the 'voice' of two teachers who have trained and worked in their respective countries during this period was a further justification of the worthiness of this research. Similarly, Ringsmose and Kragh-Muller (2017, p.75) when comparing Denmark (also a Scandinavian country like Sweden) and England say, "The two countries are interesting to compare since aims and values in early childhood represent comparable emphasis in some ECEC comparative studies, nevertheless based on very different contexts of provision, policy, formation and quality assurance." This again provides further justification for investigating the two countries where some of these differences may be further distinguished.

1.4 Scope and Aims of the Research

According to Stephenson, Ling, Birman and Cooper (1998, p.3), the main conflict pre-school teachers face is differences in values about what early childhood education should look like, and processes behind early childhood practice such as curricula and policy. When discussing values for the purpose of this investigation, I have avoided the use of the word 'professional', as it is a contested term, in the belief that pre-school teachers

will have their own subjective views of how this is defined. In order to clarify the term ‘values’, the definition by Hill (1991, p.26) will be used:

> When people speak of values, they are usually referring to those beliefs held by individuals to which they attach special priority or worth and by which they tend to order their lives. A value is, therefore, more than a belief but it is also more than a feeling.

According to Halsted and Taylor (2000), values are also understood to be principles that guide human action and by which actions are judged to be good or desirable. However, the term ‘values’ is interconnected with individual and social beliefs, those of the community in which teachers live and work as well as wider societal and political influences. Therefore, it is useful to draw upon Habermas’ (1987) theoretical ideas about communicative actions, life worlds and systems here, as this provides a framework for the exploration of values in pre-schools from multiple perspectives. These include:

1. Participants’ inside perspectives of values (individual);
2. The communication through which values are conveyed (setting and community/lifeworld);
3. Broader contexts which include the curriculum and education policies which frame the communication of values (culture and society/system).

Habermas' (1987) theory identifies relationships between the individual, 'life world' and 'system', and this helps to reveal the reasons why there may be differences between teachers' values. Similarly, Vandenbroeck (2017) reaffirms how pre-school teachers hold the power to decide what dominant discourse they prefer, and what they wish to be dominant, but also what truth they wish to construct. In addition, Vandenbroeck (2017, 1.10) argues that "truth is not something that is absolute and immutable and out there awaiting discovery from an impartial scientist" but "truth is the contingent product of particular situated ways of comprehending the world."

The idea of situated values is aligned to the comparative nature of this research. I have developed a conceptual framework as a significant contribution to knowledge as part of this investigation in order to look forensically at the 'messiness' of how two teachers' values are situated Ausubel (1963). Figure 2.2 (page 43) shows the complexities of how values can be examined through different lenses, revealing how they can be strategically made visible. This opportunity enables the values of two pre-school teachers who are individuals, situated in pre-school settings with different societal, political and cultural influences, to be illuminated. Kelly (2013) states that comparative education is a useful means of relating teaching to its political context, and this is confirmed by several research studies such as those by Alexander (2000) and Broadfoot and Osborne (1993). According to Kelly:

> Such studies suggest the specific political economies of countries and the different systematic and accountability

> structures within which teachers work give rise to different conceptions of teaching and professional development; indeed, different professional identities which are evident in both the working practices and espoused beliefs of teachers.
>
> (Kelly, 2013, p.416)

Relating this to the scope of this study, the studies which Kelly cites have contrasted policy, institutional and individual contexts; they also suggest that teachers play a key role in negotiating the influence of each on their practice. According to Kubow and Fossum (2007, p.505):

> Comparative inquiry often leads to an examination of the role that education plays in individual and national development. It encourages us to question our education system and to examine how societal values influence our attitudes toward how we educate.

Therefore, adding further scope and justification for this research, Kelly asserts that:

> Comparative research has yet to account for how social and political value positions transform into acts of teaching situated in certain conditions or bring values and practice together into an approach which allows teaching embedded in one context to be compared with teaching embedded in another.
>
> (Kelly, 2013, p.417)

Kelly (2013) believes that this can be carried out by comparing pedagogy and the role of the adult, which is a key focus of this investigation. Therefore, in terms of the scope of this research, comparing the similarities and differences of two teachers' values will generate new knowledge and

has ‘transferability’ to others interested in pedagogy, social constructs, professional values and children’s learning experiences in pre-school settings.

There are, however, dilemmas attached to comparative enquiries. Bertram and Pascal (2002, p.32), in their cross-national studies of early years curricula, emphasise that “attempts to formulate notions of examples of best practice, which might erroneously arise from this form of international policy sharing, need to be placed carefully within the national context.” Therefore, according to Bertram and Pascal (2002, p.32), “Given societal norms, what is appropriate for one nation may not be appropriate for another.” This suggests that what may suit and ‘best fit’ one society may not necessarily be effective and appropriate practice in another society. While the influence of ‘lifeworld’ and ‘system’ (Habermas, 1987) will be explored, the key emphasis in this research is placed upon the values which pre-school teachers hold. In particular this includes pedagogical practices, their own role and the learning experiences offered.

Pre-school teachers’ values are also a focus of a study undertaken with Scandinavian pre-school teachers by Puroila, Johansson, Estola, Emilson, Einarsdottir and Broström (2016). This research was informed by the idea that values are implicit in teachers’ work in early years. According to Stephenson *et al.* (1998), pre-school teachers are required to base their practice (and thus their values) on firmly constructed theoretical positions: “This demands that practitioners reflect, read, think critically and analytically, select and synthesise a variety of stances and that they selectively and

reflectively construct for themselves a firm theoretical position from which to proceed" (Stephenson *et al.,* 1998, p.5). They also assert that if teachers do not engage in such reflective practices, then their practice is likely to be lacking in cohesion and consistency and is potentially ineffective. Stephenson *et al.* (1998, p.3) go further: "Everybody knows what they want from education until they are asked to spell it out. Then it becomes apparent that many people simply have a warm fuzzy feeling about education." Thus, values are personalised. However, the opportunity to articulate the values of an English and Swedish pre-school teacher will provide an insight into what educational values can begin to look like.

1.5 Rationale for the Research Questions

The intention of comparing the values in two pre-school teachers' accounts led to the development of Research Questions One and Two:

1. What are the values of pre-school teachers in relation to the learning experiences that should be offered to children aged three to four?
2. What do teachers believe their role should be in enhancing the learning experiences of children aged three to four?

The use of the term 'learning experiences' includes pedagogical practices and the early years environment in which children learn. Vandenbroeck (2017) proposes that it is pre-school teachers who decide what experiences children should have and what their role is; and therefore the values of pre-school teachers are of vital importance. Similarly, Pascal and Bertram

(2012) highlight the importance of pre-school teachers having values which underpin their pedagogical practices. When thinking about what experiences children should have, ideas about pedagogy are reflected in research by Walsh, Sproule, McGuinness, Trew and Ingram *(*2010, p. 22). The findings reveal a synthesis of desired pedagogical approaches gathered from 20 different countries. These include:

- Emphasis upon interactional pedagogy
- Play based experiences
- Opportunity for children to self-manage and direct their learning
- Collaborative learning
- Role of the adult in facilitating learning through guided interaction.

These points also reflect images of the child and societal values as to how children should be treated differently. It can be concluded, therefore, that rather than 'a pedagogy', pre-school teachers have 'pedagogies' or a cluster of pedagogical notions, and during the course of the pre-school day different pedagogical approaches may be required (Athey, 2007). This might be through the provision of instructive environments for play and exploration and might be just one pedagogical strategy used alongside others such as modelling and demonstration, questioning and direct instruction (Siraj-Blatchford, 2004, in Anning, Cullen and Fleer, 2009).

However, pedagogical practices are more than individual in nature. Many writers have advocated a sociocultural approach to pedagogy (Alexander,

2000; Pollard, 2001; Daniels, 2001; Leach and Moon, 2008). Rogoff (2003) argued that pedagogy is a complex term to define and is based upon wider interconnected influences, including social, cultural and historical factors. Similarly, Leach and Moon's (2008) definition of pedagogy also captures the multidimensional qualities of pedagogy and the role of the adult. It is viewed as a "...dynamic process informed by theories, beliefs and dialogues only realised in the daily interaction of learners and teachers in real settings" (Leach and Moon, 2008, p.6). Exploring the reality and rhetoric of values and how they can be influenced by curriculum guidance and policy led to the development of Research Question Three:

3. How do these values relate to local/national policy guidelines?

As Bruner (1996, p.63) argues, "Real pedagogy is always political in its broadest sense." Thus the curriculum for early childhood education across different countries varies in scope, objectives and evaluation but also in methods as well as perspectives on children's play and learning (OECD, 2012). Pre-schools in England follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (DfE, 2017) where the emphasis is placed on play-based learning in the indoor and outdoor environment. A key aspect of the EYFS is also that it provides in-depth guidance that sets a framework that all pre-school teachers are required to follow. However, the ideology underlying the EYFS is linked to a requirement that children have the knowledge and skills they need to start school. The curriculum for pre-schools in Sweden is national and statutory (Lpfö, 2010). It was first issued in 1998, revised in 2010, and has

just been revised more recently in 2018. The focus (like the EYFS) is also on play-based pedagogy, but whereas the English EYFS (DfE, 2017) requires pre-school teachers to assess and make judgements against a set of prescribed goals, the Swedish Pre-School curriculum identifies goals to be aimed for and not goals to achieve (Lpfö, 2010). Therefore, it appears that English pre-school teachers are forced to put the curriculum before the pedagogy where in Sweden the pedagogy comes first, followed by the curriculum. There is some confusion regarding the use of the term 'curriculum' (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford and Taggart, 2008). According to Sylva *et al.* (2010, p.149), in the early childhood field over the past two decades, pedagogy and curriculum have been used interchangeably which may have led some pre-school teachers and writers to present "false dichotomies between 'schoolification' and 'socio pedagogy'". Differences in values, policy and approaches to the curriculum between England and Sweden have led to the development of Research Question Four:

4. What is revealed by a comparison of teachers' values in Swedish and English settings?

The following title and research questions have therefore been formulated:

An Exploration of English and Swedish Pre-School Teachers' Perspectives on Their Roles and Values

1. What are the values of pre-school teachers in relation to the learning experiences that should be offered to children aged three to four?
2. What do teachers believe their role should be in enhancing the learning experiences of children aged three to four?
3. How do these values relate to local/national policy guidelines?
4. What is revealed by a comparison of teachers' values in Swedish and English settings?

1.6 Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis comprises a further six chapters. Chapter Two provides an introduction to a review of literature and how this was conducted and identified, as well as exploring the concept of values in pre-school teachers' practice. Chapter Three draws together the broader conceptualisation of the role of the pre-school setting environment by looking at the different learning experiences offered in pre-school settings and the broader social, political and cultural contexts which influence this. This includes: 'How Children Learn', 'The Rights of the Child', 'Relationships' and 'The Learning Environment'. Chapter Four, 'Pedagogical Approaches', investigates differences in definitions of pedagogy and pedagogical approaches to the curriculum and how these are interpreted in practice, and the role of the adult within this in early years settings. Chapter Five outlines the research design and methodology, and Chapter Six offers an analysis of key findings arising from the data collection. It includes two parts which are each related to specific research questions. Finally, Chapter Seven provides key

conclusions and recommendations and highlights my study's unique contribution to knowledge.

Chapter Two – Literature Review – Values

2.1 An Introduction to the Literature Review

This chapter provides a context for all the research questions, as it collates and critiques literature on values and relates this to early years practice. Indeed, the following three Chapters [Two, Three and Four] all include focused literature reviews which locate the conceptual foundation of my study and support the research questions:

- Chapter Two – Teachers' Values
- Chapter Three – Social, Political and Cultural Contexts
- Chapter Four – Pedagogical Practices

These sections of the literature review form the substantive underpinning, illuminating much of the theory and concepts on which this study is based. They also feed into the discussion and debate in the final chapters of analysis and conclusion. The titles and focus of these chapters have been generated from the conceptual framework formulated as part of this investigation and as a significant contribution to knowledge. This will be explained on page 43 and in Figure 2.2 under the heading 'Situated Pedagogy'.

Sharp (2011, p.1) states that when considering how to manage a literature review this is a "research method in which the 'data' is the existing literature and provides a synthesis/overview of evidence in a particular area." She also postulates that a literature review should:

- Adopt clear parameters, questions and protocols
- Ensure that all decisions are documented
- Use a best evidence approach
- Adopt a consistent approach to summarising evidence.

(Sharp, 2011, p.1)

What this suggests is that the 'data' is the existing data offered by the literature search but the 'research method' is the systematic and rigorous way in which a literature review is undertaken. Figure 2.1 below illustrates the literature review stages as identified by Sharp (2011, p.5), and this is the process which was undertaken for the purposes of this literature review which will be explained in more detail in Table 2.1.

Figure 2.1 – Literature Review Stages

Table 2.1 – Literature Process for this Research

1. Purpose and definition	Process: • Review research questions • Gain feedback • Engage in dialogue • Shape the purpose and focus Examples: - Literature from 2010 to 2020 in England and Sweden using university library search engine, key words: - 'Comparative education' - 'Pre-school' 'values' 'role of the adult in early years' - I used a reflective journal to log key moments, literature and conversations as a tool to demonstrate my thought processes throughout my PhD
2. Finding and selecting material	Process: • Bibliographical databases • Websites and search engines • Harvesting • Hand searches • Experts and professional networks Examples: - Refined literature search by using Google Scholar and Education Research Complete to search key words (as identified in part one) - Carried out a 'hand search' at university library for book chapters and books which may be relevant to my literature review key words (as identified in part one) - 'Harvesting' was a technique used by looking at bibliographies from the search engines and hand searches which lead to more specific journal articles

	- Search engines were also offering similar articles from searching key words - These articles were available through Shibboleth and for some I requested access from the British Library - Utilised PhD network for sources and attended some of the Level 8 Masters sessions at CREC to gain additional information and wider reading for my literature search
3. Summarising and assessing the evidence	Process: • Decided on criteria • Judged relevance • Prioritised and kept notes Examples: - Started to judge the literature searched and relevance of this and prioritise what literature was more relevant to my investigation - Kept notes and a record of all the literature searched via Word - Made more meticulous notes on more relevant literature making a summary of the key components - This included: study purpose, type of literature, methods and key findings - I then judged the quality of the literature sources in terms of: was the design suitable, were the methods sound and were the conclusions based on the evidence provided?
4. Analysis (synthesis and interpretation)	Process: • Relies on the best studies • Discards evidence from less good studies in terms of relevance and design • Comments on the quality of the evidence base • Themes Examples: - I decided to use and discard

	evidence from less good literature in terms of relevance, design and quality and irrelevant studies - From this I then put my literature search into more specific themes: 'comparative education in early years', 'early years and pre-schools in Sweden and England', 'values', 'the role of the adult in early years', 'the meaning of pedagogy and pedagogical approaches' and the 'learning environment including how children learn'. - The additional key words came from exploring the literature in more depth again in 2018-2020 and it became apparent that these themes were interconnected and could not be separated.
5. Reporting and Impact	Process: • Purpose and audience • Alternatives to text • Identify gaps • Search strategy Examples: - Literature search complete and also a consideration of how some of this may be possible to be illustrated through text and tables - Needed to identify gaps in the literature so I decided to wait until I had carried out my data collection in case additional themes were identified when analysing my data - Made a list of potential gaps in the literature and for this investigation there was a gap in reference to 'values' in early years - The literature referred to 'values in education' and how we can 'teach values' but not specifically pre-

	school teachers' values - Therefore this section of the literature review has utilised a plethora of literature regarding this but it has been related to the focus of this research through additional interpretation and evaluation

Thus, the structure and formation of the literature review was systematically and rigorously conducted. For example, in this chapter, '*Values'* is self-evidently the focus. And, as detailed above, in the subsequent chapters, the targeted focus of the research literature review shifts. But it will also be apparent that research literature is embedded throughout the thesis and not just in these targeted chapters. Clearly, the methodology (Chapter Five) has a large section on research methodology; other chapters refer to literature that emerged through the stages illustrated in Table 2.1 (on page 30) and in particular 'reporting and impact' by looking at the themes developed as part of the literature search and using these in framing and structuring the findings chapter, for example. In terms of deciding on the literature searched for the methodology chapter and in particular polyvocal ethnography, this came from identifying 'purpose and definition' which I became aware of through conversations and conference discussions with a number of other academics who had carried out polyvocal ethnography. I then focussed my reading on this method of data collection and engaged in dialogue with other PhD students over a period of time before using this as a data collection process. So, parts of the following three chapters represent a substantive account, but not the totality, of my review of relevant and informative literature. There were some that I considered but decided that they did not fit

or were less relevant. For example, I searched different methodological processes which could be used to ascertain teachers' values such as focus groups and semi structured interviews, but it was felt that this would not get 'under the surface' of early years practitioners' values. I also searched 'comparative education' and although some of this will be included in the literature review to provide a context for early years in England and Sweden, the historical aspect of this has been excluded in the final thesis.

2.2 Introduction to the Chapter

This section of the literature review reveals a key aspect of this thesis which is an exploration of pre-school teachers' values. This consists of exploring the meaning of values and why values are important in early years practice. The focus of this chapter therefore is underpinned by three of the research questions: Research Question One: What are the values of pre-school teachers in relation to the learning experiences that should be offered to children aged three to four? Research Question Three: 'How do these values relate to local/national policy guidelines?' and Research Question Four: 'What is revealed by a comparison of teachers' values in Swedish and English settings?'

2.3 Teachers' Values

When exploring the literature in relation to values, much of this refers to teaching values to children and the debate surrounding the place that values hold within the curriculum, which is not the focus of this study. After searching the literature further, however, it became apparent that a

distinctive feature regarding values in early years is the role of the adult and the significant part they play in young children's learning and development. For example, Moyles (2001, p.82) found when researching pre-school teachers' practice that they often express a 'passion' for their job and the children. Various researchers and individuals (such as Woods, 1996; Woods and Jeffrey, 1996; Pollard and Filer, 1999; Colwell and Pollard, 2015; Nias, 1989 and Saltzberger-Wittenberg, 1983) have written about teachers who 'love' teaching and who see teaching as 'worthwhile and rewarding' because of the children, their spontaneity and the sheer joy of working in a job which brings them so close to children, families and communities. Moyles (2001) summarises how teaching three and four-year-old children therefore involves emotional responses as well as developing intimate relationships and getting to know individual children. According to Moyles (2001), young children are also pre-programmed and have an innate psychological drive which requires teachers to respond to them in a way which nurtures their eagerness to learn and motivates young children to explore the world around them. It could be argued that this requires teachers to have a certain set of characteristics and dispositions. Edgington (2004) refers to essential characteristics of an early years teacher which include: warmth and empathy, spontaneity, skills of reflection and analysis, clear principles underpinning practice, ability to communicate with a wide range of people, and an ability to take the lead. They should also have an ability to be playful and make learning fun, imagination and creativity, in-depth understanding of child development and effective learning, conscientious record-keeping, and an optimistic disposition and 'can do' approach.

However, Moyles (2001) states that teachers' 'professionalism' can be called into question, and that there is now a new 'professionalism' which demands more of teachers than ever before. This new 'professionalism' includes the knowledge, skills and practices that teachers must have in order to be effective educators (Moyles, 2001). In order to achieve this Moyles (2001) believes that early years teachers need to engage in dialogue and critical discourse, critiquing their own thinking, linking to their own personal values. This resonates with the ideas of Holland *et al. (*1998, p.8) and the idea of 'figured worlds' which is defined as "a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are organised, significance is assigned to certain acts and particular outcomes are valued over others." This construct is underpinned by the thinking of Vygotsky (social constructivism), Bakhtin (dialogism) and Bourdieu (framing to the role of culture in development) (Holland *et al.,* 1998). Thus, Holland *et al.* (1998, p.7) believe that "individuals possess multiple identities that they develop as well as those that can be given through their dialogic interaction with specific practices and activities situated in historically contingent, socially enacted, culturally constructed 'worlds'." These worlds are context specific, and therefore "one's role, what is valued, accepted, and discussed depends on the participants who are engaged within that figured world" (Holland *et al.,* 1998, p.131). Therefore figured worlds do not act in isolation from each other; rather, they are in constant interaction and within these interactions, particular worlds carry more value and influence (Holland, *et al.,* 1998). What this suggests is that although early years practitioners may

have a set of ‘core’ values based on their ‘figured worlds’, these can change and be adapted based on their experiences and interactions. Similarly, Brookfield (2017) has explored where ‘values’ come from and, like Holland *et al.* (1998), believes that these assumptions come from a number of sources. These include our own experiences as learners and the way we interpret these, what generally accepted research and theory say should be happening, and how we see children responding. Often these assumptions are well justified and accurate, however sometimes they need reframing and adapting to fit a particular situation. Brookfield (2017, p.4) suggests that teachers’ underlying beliefs and values must be scrutinised through critical reflection which is the intentional process of “checking the accuracy and validity of our teaching assumptions”. He also considers explicit assumptions which are conscious and on the surface of our values, whereas implicit assumptions “soak into consciousness from the professional and cultural air around you. Consequently, they are often harder to identify” (Brookfield, 2017, p.4). Thus, through dialogue and discussion these assumptions will become more explicit. Moreover, teachers may then choose which cultural and pre-school setting assumptions [values] they wish to take forward into their teaching practice. This suggests that a transformative process can take place as teachers engage in deep reflection and analysis and bring their values to the ‘surface’ of their practice. This resonates with the belief of Mezirow (1997) and his idea in relation to ‘transformative learning’, which is a process of effecting change in a ‘frame of reference.’ Mezirow (1997, p.5) states that “adults have acquired a coherent body of experience – associations, concepts, values, feelings, conditioned

responses – frames of reference which define their life world." What this claims is that 'frames of reference' are the structures or assumptions through which adults understand their world and their experiences. Furthermore, "they selectively shape and delimit expectations, perceptions, cognition and feelings – they set out our 'line of action'" (Mezirow, 1997, p.5). According to Mezirow (1997), adults tend to reject ideas and see them as unworthy of consideration if they fail to fit into their pre-conceptions. Also part of Mezirow's (1997) thinking is the term 'frame of reference' which is complicated, multifaceted and composed of two dimensions: habits of mind and a point-of-view. These are predominantly the outcome of cultural assimilation and from the influence of close family members. Habits of mind are more permanent than points of view. "Habits of mind are broad, abstract, orienting, habitual ways of thinking, feeling and acting influenced by assumptions that constitute a set of codes" (Mezirow, 1997, p.6). "These codes may be cultural, social, educational, economic, political, or psychological. Therefore, habits of mind become articulated in a specific point-of-view – the constellation of belief, value judgement, attitude and feeling that shapes a particular interpretation" (Mezirow, 1997, p.6). This is pertinent when exploring teachers' values, as what Mezirow (1997) as well as Brookfield (2017) postulate is that teachers' values are individualised and are based on their experiences. These are influenced by the political, social and cultural contexts in which they are situated. Brookfield (2017) and Mezirow (1997) also reveal that values can be modified and assumptions challenged when teachers engage in critical reflection. As aptly articulated by Mezirow (1997, p.7), "We learn together by analysing the related

experiences of others to arrive at a common understanding that holds until new evidence or arguments present themselves." Interestingly, according to Mezirow (1997), we transform our 'frames of reference' through critical assumptions upon which our interpretations, beliefs and habits of mind or points of view are based. More importantly, we can become critically reflective of the assumptions we or others make when we learn to solve problems instrumentally or when we are involved in communicative learning. Mezirow's (1997) thinking was influenced by Jurgen Habermas (1987), the German philosopher and sociologist whose ideas have increasingly underpinned this investigation. In particular, Mezirow (1997, p.6) believes that "Habermas (1987) has helped us to understand that problem-solving and learning may be instrumental, which is the acquisition of skills and knowledge (mastering tasks, problem solving, manipulating the environment, the 'how' and the 'what')". What this means is "to manipulate or control the environment or other people to enhance efficacy in improving performance: impressionistic, normative and communicative" (Mezirow, 1997, p.6). On the other hand transformative learning is a "perspective transformation and a paradigm shift, whereby we critically examine our prior interpretations and assumptions to form new meaning – the 'why'" (Mezirow, 1997, p.6). Moreover, "Perspective transformation is achieved through (1) disorienting dilemmas, (2) critical reflection, (3) rational dialogue, and (4) communicative action" (Mezirow, 1997, p.6). In specific relation to this research is communicative action which involves at least two reasons to strive to reach an understanding of the meaning of an interpretation or the justification of a belief. More specifically, communicative action involves "understanding

purposes, values, beliefs and feelings and it is essential for learners to become critically reflective of their assumptions, underlying intentions, values, beliefs and feelings" (Mezirow, 1997, p.6).

As mentioned in Chapter One, Habermas' (1987) thinking about communicative action, life world and system is key in underpinning the conceptual framework generated as part of this investigation (Figure 2.2, page 43), and also as a structure for the findings and the literature review. This will now be introduced and explained. To put the conceptual framework into context, the ideas of Rogoff and Habermas have been used to complement each other. Rogoff (2003) explains her thinking through the 'Three Planes of Analysis'. Rogoff (2003) uses three headings which are: apprenticeship (the community plane), guided participation (the interpersonal plane), and participatory appropriation (the personal plane). These planes designate the interlocking roles of various kinds of interaction in early years settings: with the group as a whole, between individual members, and also internal to the individual subject (Rogoff, 2003). Subsequently this is associated with the integration of the children's and adults' abilities, skills and knowledge into the shared experiences of the community. For Rogoff (2003), social rules influence these interactions, and values underpin interactions, in particular how children are initiated into intersubjective interactions and shared thinking. However Rogoff (2003) does not say how values underpin these interactions from a broader societal perspective. Habermas' (1987) thinking however does encompass the influence of the broader societal context: firstly, communication through which values are

conveyed (communicative actions); secondly, participants' inside perspectives of values (lifeworld); and thirdly, the broader societal contexts framing the communication, values and values education (so the system). According to Habermas (1987), communicative action is the process through which people form their identities which serves to transmit and renew cultural knowledge in a process of mutual understandings. It is also action based upon a deliberative process, where two or more individuals interact and coordinate their actions, based on agreed interpretations of the situation (Habermas, 1987). Habermas (1987, p.2) breaks this down even further and stipulates three different types of communicative action, based on the work of Mead (1962): normatively regulated, linguistically mediated interaction, and symbolically mediated interaction. According to Habermas (1987, p.2):

> Mead (1962) develops the basic conceptual framework of normatively regulated and linguistically mediated interaction; he arrives at this point by way of a logical genesis, starting from interaction mediated by gestures and controlled by instincts, and passing through the stage of symbolically mediated interaction in signal languages.

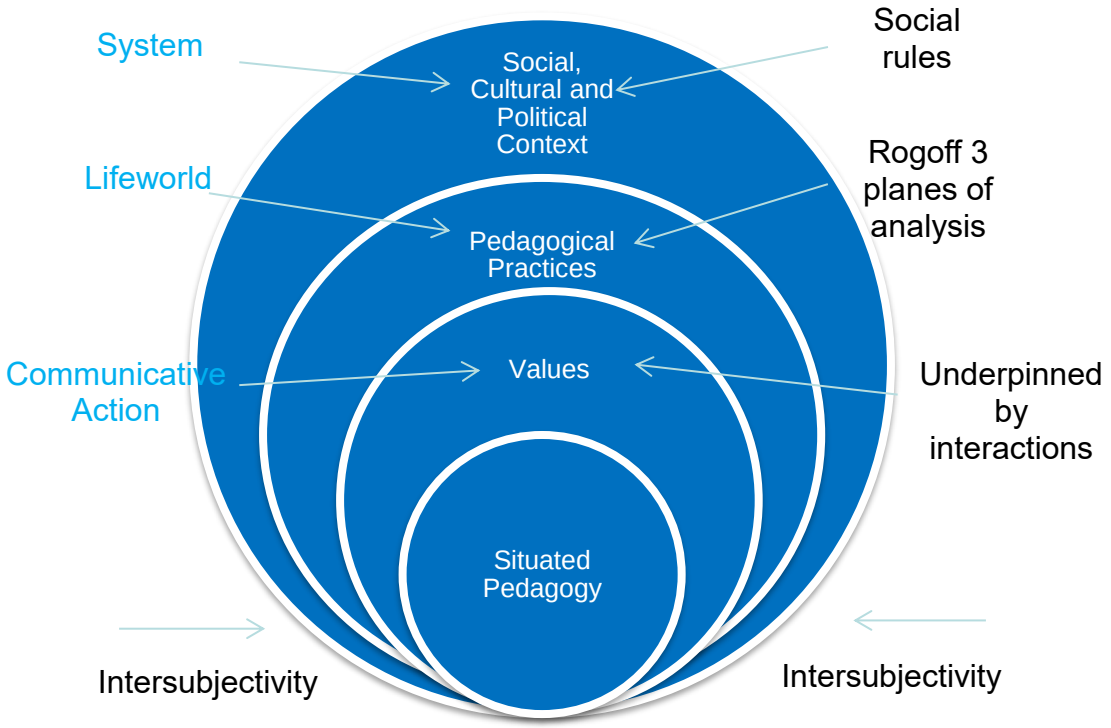
What Mead stipulates is that "language has constitutive significance for the socio cultural form of life." Therefore for Mead (1962, in Habermas, 1987, p.2), in communicative action, beyond the functioning of achieving understanding, "language plays the role of co-ordinating the goal directed activities of different subjects, as well as the role of a medium in the socialisation of these very subjects." This demonstrates how important language is in terms of reaching a shared understanding and a common goal through mediated interaction between people (normatively regulated).

Additionally, lifeworld is a concept complementary to communicative action and the 'background' environment of competences, practices and attitudes representable in terms of one's professional cognitive horizon (Habermas, 1987, p.123). "The structures of the lifeworld lay down the forms of intersubjectivity of possible understanding" (Habermas, 1987, p.126), and for those involved the action situation is the centre of their lifeworld (linguistically mediated), and the horizon is moveable because it details the complexity of the lifeworld. This will be determined by the curricular, cultural, societal and political contexts in which adults are based – the 'system' (symbolically mediated interaction). This suggests that people will have working models based around 'situations' and their roles. Moreover, these need to be negotiated through interactions, and they must encompass value priorities and those which will take precedence.

It has been identified that both theorists are interested in how intersubjectivity is established as a platform for communication and knowledge creation. Rogoff (2003) explores how children are inducted into activities through the establishment of intersubjectivity, and for Habermas (1987), intersubjectivity is central to his ideas in relation to communicative activity. Rogoff (2003) believes that intersubjectivity is a dual process based on shared and reciprocal meanings and is constructed on the premise that an individual, including babies and young children, can participate and engage in meaningful encounters. Through such reciprocal relationships and communication, intersubjectivity allows for individuals to be able to reflect and be aware that they now have a new understanding of how children develop (Rogoff, 2003). For Habermas (1987), through communicative

action there is a shift from individualised thinking to social thinking through an intersubjective communicative relationship. Therefore intersubjectivity is viewed differently: Rogoff (2003) focuses on young children developing intersubjectivity, whereas Habermas (1987) is concerned with the wider development of intersubjectivity through the life-course across societies. The complementarity and 'layering' of Rogoff's (2003) and Habermas' (1987) thinking is illustrated below in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2 'Conceptual Framework' – Situated Pedagogy



Therefore this investigation is suggesting a framework entitled 'situated pedagogy' (Figure 2.2) which draws together Habermas' (1987) system, lifeworld and communicative action and also the three planes of analysis by

Rogoff (2003). For the purpose of this investigation, it is claimed that if we ascertain and identify practitioners' 'core' values and bring these to the surface of their practice, this will allow practitioners the opportunity to look at this from a critically reflective stance. Therefore, their practice will be 'transformed' through scrutinising, challenging and questioning, leading to a new 'situated pedagogy' which needs to be reviewed regularly.

Furthermore, Sigurdardottir, Williams and Einarsdottir (2019) echo the idea of practitioners reviewing their practice regularly, and highlight the importance of pre-school teachers having values based on their pedagogical practices and engaging in continuous pedagogical dialogue with colleagues. This is also the belief of Stephenson, Ling, Birman and Cooper (1998) who reaffirm the importance of reflective practice, stating how early years teachers are required to base their practice (and thus their values) on firmly constructed theoretical positions. This echoes the views of Stephenson *et al.* (1998), as quoted on page 22, "This demands that practitioners reflect, read, think critically and analytically, select and synthesise a variety of stances, and that they selectively and reflectively construct for themselves a firm theoretical position from which to proceed." They also assert that, if teachers do not engage in such reflective practices, their practice is likely to be lacking in cohesion and consistency and their teaching practice will potentially be ineffective. Similarly, Blenkin and Kelly (1997) sought to look at the quality of education from a range of early years provision by asking practitioners their perspectives by adopting an action research approach. The findings illuminated the importance of staff being able to recognise what was

happening in their practice. The increased awareness also encouraged practitioners to re-evaluate their practice and highlighted the “need to use close observation as a diagnostic tool and the need to be more analytical in assessing the quality of what children do” (Blenkin and Kelly, 1997, p.97). Some of the practitioners in their study also disclosed that reflecting on the quality of their practice had advanced their thinking but also “challenged previously held assumptions about their practice” (Blenkin and Kelly, 1997, p.97). This again reflects the importance of practitioners engaging in reflective practices linking to their beliefs and underpinning assumptions.

Thus, when looking at different definitions of values, according to Halsted and Taylor (2000) and Thornberg (2010, in Johansson *et al.,* 2016), values are understood as being principles that guide human action and by which actions are judged to be good or desirable. However, as previously mentioned in Chapter One, according to Hill (1991), when people speak of values, they are usually referring to those beliefs held by individuals to which they attach special priority or worth and by which they tend to order their lives. A value is therefore more than a belief but it is also more than a feeling. Hawkes (2013, p.59) concurs with this and states that “a value is a principle that guides our thinking and behaviour.” Hawkes (2013) also believes that values help to determine the formation of a teacher’s character. He argues that teachers need to actively engage with their innate values – concurring with Brookfield (2017) and his thinking regarding ‘implicit assumptions’ – and start to understand the implications for the choices they make and their attitudes and responses, again linking to Brookfield and

‘explicit assumptions.’ What this suggests is that teachers may find it hard to articulate their values, and unless they actively seek to reflect and make time to think about what their values are their practice will be less effective.

Exploring the literature further, Sigurdardottir, Williams and Einarsdottir (2019) believe that there is no specific universal definition of the concept of values, and that understanding of ‘the concept’ depends on which perspective is emphasised. For example, Johansson, Emilson and Puroila (2018) suggest that the focus can be on values in relation to the human mind and action, on individuals and cultural groups, or on context-related and universal values. A Scandinavian study, ‘Values Education in Nordic Pre-schools – Basis of Education for Tomorrow’, for example, employs a holistic view of values and sees values as intertwined in individuals’ minds and actions, rather than being wholly in either one of these domains (Tappan, 2006, in Johansson, Emilson and Puroila, 2018). Furthermore, the study takes the perspective that values emerge at the individual and group level and that individuals live according to their own personal values but also follow the values of groups they belong to (Johansson, Emilson and Puroila, 2018). This suggests that values are seen as socially constructed and context-related, rather than constant and universal. As a result, values can emerge differently in different situations, linking to a socio-cultural approach. As argued by Kelly (2013), many comparative studies have highlighted the importance and influence of national and local cultures and teacher identities on professional practice. But:

> Such research has yet to account for how social and political value positions translate into acts of teaching in certain conditions or bring values and practice together into an approach which allows teaching embedded in one context to be compared … it is my contention that this can be done through a focus on a comparison of pedagogy.
>
> (Kelly, 2013, p.417)

According to Kelly, a comparison of pedagogy can highlight shared understandings of the relationship between teachers' practices and children's experiences in the context of the wider social, political cultural and historical context in which they are rooted (Kelly, 2013).

Contrastingly, research has discovered that teachers report that the demands of multiple decisions and pedagogical practices in pre-school settings make working with values a burden. Ohnstad (2008, in Broström et al, 2015) advocates that little is known about how teachers' values are articulated and translated into educational policies. Therefore, while there is a strong focus on areas of learning in pre-school settings, there is a tendency to overlook the overarching values of pre-school teachers. Simultaneously, Colnerud (2014) and Thornberg (2008) agree that it is difficult for educators to identify and verbalise values, and thus values are often in the domain of the 'hidden curriculum' in educational settings.

Whitehead (1989) also agrees with this and argues that a 'living educational theory' of professional practice can be constructed from teachers' enquiries, questioning themselves and reflecting on their practice and how this can be

improved. Living theory research introduces teachers to the idea of an individual's explanation of educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence their practice and understanding. Furthermore, Whitehead (1989) proposes a 'propositional form' and a 'living form' of research. Examining this further, Whitehead (1989) believes that the propositional form prevents researchers getting closer to answering their questions and is indeed masking the 'living form' which can generate valid descriptions and explanations of the educational development of individuals. Indeed, Whitehead (1989, p.1) believes that:

> Academics who write about educational theory should do just that: make a claim to know their development and subject it to public criticism. In this way, I believe that they will come to see that it is possible to create a living educational theory which can be related directly to practice.
>
> (Whitehead, 1989, p.1)

Whitehead (1989) also proclaims that by using video to record teachers' practice (as in this research), teachers have to confront the questions which arise on recognising the 'I' in the questions as a 'living contradiction.' Teachers can see the educational values they hold, whilst at the same time negating them. He also states that when teachers answer questions about their own practice, they present values whose meaning can only be clarified in the course of their emergence in practice. Thus, by sharing these through dialogue, Whitehead (1989, p.4) states that "practitioners then produce educational theory in the living form of dialogue which has its focus in the

descriptions and explanations which practitioners are producing for their own value laden practice." Furthermore, in viewing practice "we [teachers] can both experience ourselves as living contradictions and communicate our understanding of the value-laden practical activity of education" (Whitehead, 1989, p.5). What this suggests is again the importance of teachers engaging in reflective dialogue and practice which will bring to the surface their underpinning values and justify their pedagogical approach to the curriculum, the role of the adult and the experiences they provide in pre-school settings.

2.4 Conclusion to the Chapter

This first part of the literature review chapter has illustrated and justified the structure and the content of the literature for this investigation. An exploration of the meaning and importance of values has also been explored, and how this applies to early years practice. It has been identified that practitioners have a set of values which come from a variety of sources; but the literature explored concludes that early years practitioners' values are socially, culturally and politically situated based on their experiences, and therefore they are personalised and 'situated'. This chapter has introduced the conceptual framework of 'situated pedagogy' which will be referred to and intertwined throughout this thesis. The next chapter will explore the social, political and cultural contexts with specific reference to England and Sweden, drawing together the differences and similarities and the impact of these on early years practitioners values. The five themes identified for the purpose of this research will be used as a structure for this.

Chapter Three – Literature Review – Social, Political and Cultural Contexts

3.1 Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter offers a broader conceptualisation of the social, political and cultural contexts in England and Sweden relating to early years. Therefore the emphasis is on the influences these contexts will have on pre-school teachers' practice and the learning experiences they provide. This chapter draws on all four research questions but in particular Research Question One, Three and Four in terms of how practitioner values relate to policy in their relative countries and also what the literature reveals when comparing these. Thus, this chapter will include a discussion on how pre-school children learn, how practitioners advocate for the rights of the child, the importance of relationships, and how practitioners utilise both the indoor and outdoor environments in supporting children's learning. The themes were extracted from the teachers in this investigation ('How Children Learn', 'Rights of the Child', 'Relationships', 'Learning Environment') and will be continued themes for Chapter Six when reporting on the analysis of the findings. 'Pedagogical Approaches' was also a theme as an outcome of this investigation but this will be considered as a chapter on its own in Chapter Four.

3.2 Social, Political and Cultural Contexts in England and Sweden

In England, a significant moment in government policy in relation to early years was the 'The Rumbold Report, Starting with Quality' (Department of

Education and Science (DES), 1990). This was significant for English policy as it involved a consultation period with early years practitioners, researchers and academics, which previous government policy had not included. 'The Rumbold Report' (DES, 1990) also acknowledged how important the role of the adult was in early years settings and how all areas of children's learning and development were of equal value. Another considerable shift in English policy was the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2008) which has since been updated several times (Department for Education (DfE), 2012; DfE, 2014a; DfE, 2017). This was welcomed by the early years sector as it combined education and care for children aged birth to five in England. It is underpinned by a principled approach (the unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments, and the different ways in which children learn and develop), which should shape early years practice, taking into consideration individual and socio-cultural factors and their impact on children's learning and development. The EYFS (DfE, 2017) recognises the importance of play and a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, and there is an emphasis on the development of academic and literacy skills, social and emotional development, and creative and physical development. It is important to highlight that the framework does not include any explicit guidance for staff on pedagogical practice and does not prescribe a pedagogical approach, but it does set out some parameters that frame pedagogy. This is illustrated in the EYFS guidance which works alongside the EYFS 'Development Matters' (DfE, 2014b), which offers guidance material for practitioners for implementing the statutory requirements for

learning and development. The ways in which children engage with other people and their environment is evident through three characteristics of effective learning: playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically (DfE, 2014b). Alongside this is the national system of assessment, set out in 'The EYFS Profile Handbook' (DfE, 2008), later updated (DfE, 2012; DfE, 2019). The EYFS profile summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of the EYFS in relation to 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) descriptors. Moreover, for each ELG, practitioners must judge whether a child is: meeting the level of development expected at the end of the reception year (expected); exceeding this level (exceeding); or has not yet reached this level (emerging). According to DfE (2015a), in a paper entitled, 'Pedagogy in Early Childhood Education and Care' (ECEC): an international comparative study of approaches and policies', pedagogy in England has several strengths. They assert that it promotes continuous child development for the whole ECEC age range by implementing a single curriculum framework, and that it "puts emphasis on age-appropriateness and play in pedagogy, and encourages staff to employ different approaches and practices flexibly" (DfE, 2015a, p.4). It also emphasises developmentally appropriate activities and the value of play, and has "favourable staff-child ratios in place that can positively impact pedagogy" (DfE, 2015a, p.4). According to DfE in 2019, 92% of three year old children (an increase of 11% from 2018) and 95% of four year old children accessed early education in England. The EYFS in England is currently under review. According to DfE (2019), the review includes improving early years outcomes for disadvantaged children and specifically providing more Reception year

guidance (for children aged four to five years) to ensure that they have strong foundations for beginning Year 1 (for children aged five to six years). This will be considered in more depth on page 62 of this chapter when looking at contemporary perspectives in relation to early years policy.

Swedish educational policy, like England, also saw a major change in the 1990's, and in 1996 the responsibility for pre-school activities and school child-care services was transferred from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs to the Ministry of Education and Science. Thus, like English policy, this meant that education and care were combined and were all under one umbrella from pre-school to senior high school (gymnasium). In 1998, a curriculum for pre-school was introduced which has been updated in 2010 and 2018. The overall national goals are set out by the Swedish parliament and government in the Education Act (2010) and the curriculum should be viewed as a framework, with guidelines, that gives direction to the work of early childhood settings. This is underpinned by democracy which is evident in the opening aim of the pre-school curriculum which states:

> Democracy forms the foundation of the preschool. The Education Act (2010: 800) stipulates that education in the preschool aims at children acquiring and developing knowledge and values. It should promote all children's development and learning, and a lifelong desire to learn. An important task of the preschool is to impart and establish respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is based.
>
> (Lpfö, 2010, p. 1)

Additionally, the pre-school curriculum Lpfö (1998; 2010) includes twenty three goals which encourage children to make sense of their world through the creation of a rich, stimulating learning environment. The Swedish pre-school curriculum also includes norms and values and states that "the pre-school should actively and consciously influence and stimulate children into developing their understanding and acceptance of our society's shared democratic values" (Lpfö, 2010, p.3), saying that "the pre-school should take account of the fact that children have different living environments and that they try to create context and meaning out of their own experiences." The pre-school curriculum also refers to taking into account the ecology of children's lives and therefore situates itself within a societal and community socio-cultural framework. It advocates that "adults should give children support in developing trust and self-confidence [and that the child's] curiosity, initiative and interests should be encouraged and their will and desire to learn should be stimulated" (Lpfö, 2010, p.9). The Swedish pre-school curriculum also discusses the pedagogical approaches adopted by teachers. Accordingly, this should be underpinned by recognition that "care, socialisation and learning together form a coherent whole. The activities should be carried out so that they stimulate and challenge the child's learning and development. The learning environment should be open, enriched by content and attractive" (Lpfö, 2010, p.9). Overall, the pre-school curriculum suggests that learning and development should be holistic and should be delivered through a play-based approach. Sandberg and Arlemalm-Hagser (2014) assert that the Swedish National Curriculum for pre-schools determines the curriculum for all early childhood settings in Sweden.

Swedish pre-schools (which is the name given to all childcare settings) are now available for children aged one to five years and are used by 80% of the country's children (Sweden.SE, 2020). In summary, the school system in Sweden is goal-based with a high degree of local government responsibility, and local authorities continue to be the main providers of ECEC (Cohen, Moss, Petrie and Wallace, 2018).

The Lpfö (2018) version of the school curriculum does devote a separate chapter to school aged childcare, "proposing play as a way for children to develop capabilities such as co-operation, communication and creativity and identity" (Cohen, Moss, Petrie and Wallace, 2018, p, 9). However, it must be noted that although pre-schools are an integral part of the schools in Sweden, and the pre-school curriculum Lpfö (2018) stipulates that teachers are to provide 'stimulating learning and development', this does not mean that pre-schools are a place of formal learning but that the pre-school setting should offer children time for play and creativity (Skolverket, 2019). The pre-school documentation also "does not lay down the means by which the goals should be attained as this is an issue primarily for the teachers in the preschool" (Pramling Samuelson and Sheridan, 2004, p.10). Markstrom and Hallden (2008, p,1) echo this and state that "parents, preschool teachers and politicians share the idea that the time in pre-school is not only necessary because the parents need access to childcare while working but it is also important for the child's development and is an investment for society as a whole." Samuelsson (2003) refers to the Swedish approach to the curriculum as developmental pedagogy. This means that "the experiences

children have in preschool, in close relationship with their earlier experiences, influence their learning and development" (Samuelsson, 2003, in Einarsdottir and Wagner, 2006, p.106). What this emphasises is that "a child's way of acting, thinking and communicating is always dependent on both earlier experiences and how the child perceives his or her particular settings, tasks, questions, interactions and experiences" (Ibid). Similarly, an evaluation by Skolovert (2020) demonstrated that the Swedish curriculum for pre-schools potentially has a strong impact on pre-school practitioners in giving support for everyday play and learning activities in early childhood settings in two ways: first, because it shapes practitioners' learning experiences and changes how they go about pre-school activity; second, because it is also a tool for communication with parents. Sandberg and Arlemalm-Hagser (2014, p.5) concur and believe that "spreading the knowledge on how the national curriculum can contribute to opening up new perspectives and changes in pedagogical activities is of educational importance in both Sweden and internationally."

Furthermore, when drawing the similarities in policy in England and Sweden, between 1996 and 1998 England and Sweden took similar policy steps by moving all ECEC and school aged childcare under the umbrella of education. However, according to Cohen *et al.* (2018), by 2017 the results were very different. For example, Sweden's education system has effectively integrated ECEC and school aged childcare into the education system. This also includes universal access to pre-school settings, reduced parental fees and a commitment to the enhanced status of pre-school teachers and the

pedagogue's role. Moreover, multi-professional teams consisting of pre-school teachers, pedagogues and teachers have also been introduced as well as a series of professional development courses to enhance teachers' practice. This therefore demonstrates a commitment to support all children and their families through shared communication and ethos (Cohen *et al.,* 2018).

In contrast, English development in relation to pre-school policy has been "one of stalled integration" (Cohen, Moss, Petrie and Wallace, 2018, p.11). Like Sweden, the transferring of ECEC and school aged childcare initiated a process of integration as well as an integrated inspection system and a birth to five curriculum. Thus, the English pre-school system, by 2017, was still arguably fragmented and only partly integrated. Therefore, progress towards a fully integrated system, like Sweden's, eradicating the early education and childcare divide, "halted before it tackled the 'wicked issues' of access, funding, workforce and provision" (Kaga, Bennett and Moss, 2010, p.12). According to Cohen, Moss, Petrie and Wallace (2018, p.11), "This failure was exemplified and sustained by the absence of any broad integrative understanding, encompassing ECEC, school age-childcare (SCAA) and schools that recognised, in the words of the Swedish curriculum, that care, socialisation and learning together form a coherent whole." Moreover, in England, the divisive language of 'childcare', 'childcare services' and 'childcare costs' created a public discourse in ECEC, and this was evident in policy documents such as 'English Department for Education' (2013) and 'HM Government' (2013).

In summary, Cohen, Moss, Petrie and Wallace (2018) offer four reasons why Swedish and English policy are at very different stages. Firstly, the transferability of ECEC and school-age related childcare happened at very different stages of policy and service development. Secondly, “having well developed services, with difficult issues of access, funding and workforce already resolved, Sweden could focus on steady incremental development, taking advantage of the new home for ECEC” (Cohen *et al.,* 2018, p.14). However, in England, this has been a more immediate and a less systematic reform which has arguably caused a greater fragmentation of services. Thirdly, in England, a centralised government has led local authorities to exercise strong leadership in reshaping the fragmentation between ECEC services. This is in contrast with Sweden, where power has been decentralised to local authorities. Fourthly, there is a significant difference in the way policy has been made. According to Cohen, Moss, Petrie and Wallace (2018, p.14), “There is a strong tradition in Sweden of gradual evolution of policy and provision, based on extensive discussion, inquiry (for example, via commissions) and building widespread support; a reflective democratic culture has permeated ECEC and school age-childcare SCAA.” In England, however, local education authorities have been primarily disbanded since 1997, losing valuable knowledge and staff expertise.

To summarise the differences, it has been observed that both countries have had major policy changes although Swedish changes in the educational system have been more gradual. England's reform, however, has happened very quickly with government commitments aiming for quick results. “A

social welfare regime has underpinned Swedish policy change, but the liberal regime in England has not been so successful" (Cohen, Moss, Petrie and Wallace, 2018, p.15). Furthermore, "faced by an early growth of maternal employment, the Swedish welfare regime responded by acknowledging a public responsibility and developing and resourcing a public system of services to meet the needs of children and parents" (Cohen, Moss, Petrie and Wallace, 2018, p.15). Contrastingly, "England has treated maternal employment as a private issue, leaving parents to cope as best as they could and while acknowledging public responsibility for 'early education' this was a low priority" (Cohen, Moss, Petrie and Wallace, 2018, p.15). As summarised by Jarvis, Swiniarski and Holland (2017, p.9), "Much of the policy for children, young people and families in England is in a constant state of flux, amidst not a little confusion." In contrast, although Swedish counterparts have fewer barriers to cross in implementing what they regard as 'best practice', there are still issues surrounding children being taught more formally, although this is when children are aged seven to eight years rather than four to five as is the case in England." When drawing together ideologies of government policy change, Cohen, Moss, Petrie and Wallace (2018, p.14) suggest four conditions in relation to this:

> Firstly, making time for thought, secondly creating conditions that provoke thinking and in particular critical thinking, thirdly providing tools for thinking about and analysing change and finally the 'existence of change' and the significance of key politicians at national and local levels to commit to change.
>
> (Cohen, Moss, Petrie and Wallace, 2018, p.209)

However, “since 2000 standards have fallen in Sweden more than in any other country ranked by OECD” (OECD 2012, p.10). Moreover, “results released in 2013, rated Sweden below Denmark, Finland and Norway by all three measures, reading, maths and science, and worse than the UK. In 2014, 14 per cent of students performed too poorly to qualify for secondary school at 16, a deterioration of 10 per cent on the 2006 level” (OECD, 2015, p.29).

The OECD report warned: “Sweden’s school system is in need of urgent change.” Underinvestment is not the problem. Sweden spends more on education as a percentage of GDP (6.8 per cent) than the OECD average (5.6 per cent). OECD (2015, p.10) reports on the Swedish education system as “an education system in chaos, hopelessly fragmented, failing those who need it most”. It criticises its “unclear education priorities”, “lack in coherence” and “unreliable data.” Also, Swedish schools lack “discipline” and “a calm work environment” which makes it hard to attract good teachers (OECD, 2015, p.10). Recently, there have been efforts in Sweden to make the teaching profession more attractive (OECD, 2012). Thus, many students being educated in an integrated teacher training system chose school teaching over pre-school teaching (Cohen, Moss, Petrie and Wallace, 2018). Therefore, the early years workforce has been recognised as needing attention and in recent Swedish policy in 2013, a new teacher registration scheme was implemented which is based on higher adult to child ratios as well as various in-service training programmes for pre-school teachers and heads (Cohen, Moss, Petrie and Wallace, 2018). Additionally, in 2016, there

was further investment in education and training for pre-school staff, with the most significant policy shift in recent years relating to the training of teachers. According to Cohen, Moss, Petrie and Wallace (2018, p.10), “An official report, Sustainable Teacher Education (SOU, 2008), argued that teacher education needed professionally specific competencies plus an age-specific orientation.” Currently in Sweden, students training to be pre-school teachers and free-time pedagogues now undertake a three-year degree with the option of a supplementary year, while teachers follow a four-year Masters programme.

In relation to policy in England, Lubeck (2000, in Penn, 2008, p.25) reports on behalf of OECD that “a school-based agenda seems to shape early education; such that childhood is treated primarily as a stage to prepare children for subsequent school achievement rather than a specific stage with its own unique learning approaches.” She also states that “a curriculum which is tied to attainment targets cannot support the multiple needs of children or develop their creativity” (Lubeck, 2000, in Penn, 2008, p.25). Lubeck also commented on how alarming it was to see the way children were ‘dragooned’ into schooling in England, when she asserted that “the downward pressure on early childhood provision to comply with demands of the formal school system raises a number of concerns about the quality of children’s learning environments” (Lubeck, 2000, in Penn, 2008, p.27). Brooker *et al.* (2010, p.4), when investigating practitioners’ experiences of the EYFS, found that they believed there was “a strong emphasis on learning and assessment which is contrary to the ethos of their work”. This suggests

that early years practitioners' values were being compromised. They also concluded that assessing children against 'The EYFS Profile Handbook' (DfE, 2008, updated in 2019) in preparation for children's 'next steps' often caused tension and frustration for early years practitioners (Brooker *et al.,* 2010).

Moss and Petrie (2002, p.51) refer to the process of 'atomisation' in England and how it is sustained and reflected by the 'ever growing' numbers of government departments and other public agencies which "find interest in the child as a means to pursue their particular goals." The authors elaborate on this further by claiming that "these interests in school age child care services are, in practice, separate … stakeholders focus on the child in different ways each in the light of their different value systems." Therefore, teachers' work in England is increasingly being viewed and evaluated solely in terms of output measures – for example, how well a school or teachers perform in an Ofsted inspection, or where the school is positioned in the league tables in relation to Standardised Attainment Tests (taken at ages seven and eleven) and EYFS profile scores (at the end of reception). Arguably, this leaves limited space for reflection and evaluation and an innovative and creative approach to the curriculum (Moss and Petrie, 2002).

3.3 Contemporary Perspectives

Thus, the role early years practitioners play in ensuring children have the best start in life is highly significant, as is the importance of them developing values and beliefs which underpin their practice and delivery of the

curriculum. It could be argued that regardless of the policy direction in their respective countries, teachers' practice should be underpinned by their values relating to how they feel children learn best and the pedagogical approaches that should support this. According to Hedges and Cooper (2018, p.369), the field of ECE "has long relied on ideology based on child-centred provision to guide educational practice"; however they also acknowledge that "child-centeredness may not always position teachers comfortably in supporting progression of, or intensifying, children's learning." To relate it to this research, it is important for early years practitioners to think about how individual children learn best and to use their professional competence in implementing Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP). However, surrounding this ideology is the influence of early years setting expectations, the curricula underpinning this, government policy as well as the cultural context in which practitioners are situated. Approaches to how children learn across cultures can often be located on a wide continuum, from some ECE approaches "allowing free choice play for children to make their own meaning without any adult input to other ECE approaches which offer adult-led didactic teaching with structured planning and routine designed to teach academic knowledge" (Hedges and Cooper, 2018, p.370). How children learn best therefore is a contested notion in early childhood, with practitioners balancing their own values and those of the rhetoric underpinning their practice. As stated by MacNaughton (2003, p.1), "All early childhood educators work within a specific social and political context and for some early childhood educators local, state, regional or national governments will have clear mandates about the curriculum goals and

learning outcomes that guide their interactions with young children." Further, according to Rose and Rogers (2012a), the plethora of evidence "in support of an active, play-based curriculum and pedagogy for young children is matched by a significant body of research which identifies marked discrepancies between theory and pedagogic practice." In agreement, Wood (2013, in Hedges and Cooper, 2018, p.369) states that "where explicitly accounting for academic outcomes has become a major emphasis in government policy, teachers may face dilemmas over developing children's emerging ideas and understandings in exploratory ways during, or following, play-based interactions."

Therefore, within some current international ECE policy, play is prevalent and the benefits are greatly recognised, but it "risks being formally prescribed and technicist" (Hedges and Cooper, 2018, p.369). This pedagogical approach to ECE promotes more formalised learning with an ambition to get children 'ready' for their next education journey. Moreover, even with several EYFS reviews in England, there are still concerns that the 'school readiness' ideology that infuses government policy continues to be the dominant discourse (Rose and Rogers, 2012), leading to 'top down' pressures by early years practitioners and compromising the learning experiences they feel are developmentally appropriate for young children in England. However, the current review of the EYFS in England may provide practitioners with a greater 'tool' to implement Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) and to challenge 'top down' policy in order to narrow the gap between the pedagogical practices which they implement and their values. There have

been some significant policy shifts over the past year in England which have arguably brought early years to the forefront of government thinking. 'Getting it Right in the Early Years Foundation Stage: a review of the evidence', which was undertaken by Pascal, Bertram and Rouse (2019), reviewed research evidence from 2009 to 2019, addressing the questions: How far does the rationale for the prime and specific areas and the characteristics of effective learning reflect current knowledge about early learning and teaching? What aspects of the EYFS are affirmed and what need adjustment based on evidence from the last 10 years? Building on evidence from the Tickell Review of the EYFS in 2011, this study used existing reviews and secondary sources, peer reviewed research papers and all areas of learning from the EYFS, the Characteristics of Effective Learning as well as pedagogic approaches (Pascal, Bertram and Rouse, 2019). This was very much welcomed by the early years sector, as the introduction of the 'Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook' (DfE, 2019) had been published with little consultation from the early years field (Pascal, Bertram and Rouse, 2019). Therefore, this research included the perspectives of a group of early years sector bodies and a practitioner survey "to ensure the EYFS remains a world-leading and well-respected framework and fit for purpose for daily use by early years practitioners and teachers" (Pascal, Bertram and Rouse, 2019, p.5). In summary, the review found that:

> There is no substantiated case for the EYFS Statutory Framework to be significantly changed. However, less advantaged children continue to underachieve and this perpetuates the gap as they progress into primary schooling. Given this context, a closer examination of the recent evidence reveals that with some modifications, particularly in relation to

> the guidance on Communication and Language Development, and giving greater prominence to the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning, these children might be better served.
>
> (Pascal, Bertram and Rouse, 2019, p.9)

It was concluded that the sector and the literature felt that no significant changes needed to be made to the document but that the characteristics of effective learning needed to be celebrated and at the forefront of early years practice to narrow the gap for less disadvantaged children. More recently has been the consultation of 'Birth to Five Matters' – 'Guidance for the Sector by the Sector' which has also been developed by a coalition of 16 early years sector organisations as well as early years practitioners (Early Years Coalition, March 2021). Two drafts have currently been produced where the early years sector has had a voice and has been able to feed back its views. The final document is being launched in September 2021 and will be non-statutory guidance which "draws on previous guidance for the EYFS and updated in order to reflect recent research, to meet the needs of practitioners, to respond to current issues in society, and to meet the needs of children today and to lay a strong foundation for their futures" (Early Years Coalition, March 2021, p.2). The purpose of the guidance includes reaffirming core principles which recognise:

> The child at the centre of practice, the child's connections within family, communities, cultures and the natural world, the need to consider the whole child: physical, social and emotional wellbeing, health and learning, the child's rights as a citizen under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
>
> (Early Years Coalition, March 2021, p.2)

Thus, there is a shift in focus and a ‘reframing’ and “the ‘Characteristics of Effective Learning’ do not include the word ‘Teaching’ because this refers to behaviours and dispositions of the child, not the adult.” There will also be a ‘toolkit’ of resources and literature to support early years practitioners with the implementation of this new guidance (Early Years Coalition, March 2021 p.2). The guidance also advocates that practitioners have a set of values which they can then use to guide their professional judgement using their knowledge of children in the context of their family and wider community, and to create a curriculum which they feel is most appropriate (Early Years Coalition, March 2021). This will be considered when looking at the meaning of pedagogy on page 109.

In relation to current policy in Sweden, according to Eurydice (2020, p.4) the new curriculum introduced in 2018 was to make even clearer what the pre-school experience should be like for children and “to contribute to a high and even quality of preschool education for all children, regardless of where they live” (Eurydice, 2020, p.4). What this suggests is that the curriculum in the pre-school has become more ‘visible’ for Swedish practitioners as well as parents. There is also a drive to support children from ‘national minority languages’ and to strengthen their ‘right’ to pre-school and to be included in all pedagogical activities throughout the whole of the pre-school environment (Eurydice, 2020). This is to make all children feel welcome in Swedish pre-schools and to ensure an equality of experience regardless of where children live. “The pre-school is a curriculum-driven school form and has the same overall goals and regulations as the other school forms” (Eurydice, 2020,

p.4). This advocates that the pre-school is valued as much as all other school phases and there is also an increasing responsibility of head teachers to oversee provision and the quality in pre-schools as set out in the pre-school curriculum (Lpfö, 2018). Additionally, the pre-school class only became compulsory in 2018. However, recent Swedish policy in 2020 was considering (and it is out for consultation) whether to lower the compulsory school age from seven to six, thereby 'skipping' the pre-school class stage (currently aged 1-6) so that children can begin more formal learning sooner at the age of six. According to Eurydice (2021, p.4), "this could help improve the knowledge results." In summary, there is a shift in Swedish policy in making head teachers more accountable for children's learning and progress, as well as children potentially starting a formal curriculum a year earlier than previously.

Before exploring the 'themes' in this literature review identified as part of this investigation, it was important for the Swedish and English policy context to be explained and discussed to provide a basis for the subsequent chapters in the literature review. The 'themes' identified by the teachers in this investigation will now be explored and used as structure for this next part of the literature review taking into consideration the social, cultural and political contexts of 'How Children Learn', 'The Rights of the Child', 'Relationships' and 'The Learning Environment'.

3.4 How Children Learn

Taylor, Bond and Woods (2013, p.115) concur that “the first few years of a child’s life are a period during which the child will learn more than in the rest of his or her lifetime.” According to Trevarthen (2013), early years pioneers, theorists and practitioners have long believed that children are born with the ability to engage in creative and co-operative learning. However, Holt (1967) believes that it was not until the 1960s that the way in which children learn, and early childhood as a field of research, were seen as important. Holt (1967, p.3) states that “everyone agrees that we should know much more about young children, how they perceive the world and live and grow within it. The question is how to do so.” Thus, during the 1960s there was a growing perspective on how young children learn, based on a developmental psychology and child development perspective. This advocated that “inherent cognitive processes are principally informed by visual experience and designed to be mediated by language, [and] should be fostered to adapt to novel information and solve rational problems” (Trevarthen, 2011, p.136). In more recent years, however there has been some questioning of the underpinning views of developmental psychology (Burman, 2008; Morss, 1996) and a growth in the influence of sociology and the study of children and childhood. According to Bruce (2015), there are three main lenses through which early childhood practitioners have viewed children and how they learn. First is the nativist lens (influenced by the thinking of Rousseau) which is opposed to the empiricist approach and perceives children to come into the world pre-programmed to unfold in a given path (Bruce, 2015). From this perspective “attainment of knowledge takes place only gradually and via

inherent maturational mechanisms" (Taylor, Bond and Woods, 2013, p.115). Second is the empiricist lens, which views children as being born as an empty vessel to be filled by adults into a desired shape, based on the thinking of Lock and the perspective of behaviourists such as Pavlov and Skinner (Taylor, Bond and Woods, 2013). This view of how children learn [empiricist] sees the child as 'passive' and responding to their environment (Taylor, Bond and Woods, 2013). The third lens is the interactionist perspective which sees children as partly empty vessels/partly pre-programmed, and argues that there is a relationship and inter-connection between the two, driven by the thinking of Kant (Bruce, 2015). Thus an 'interactionalist' or 'constructivist' approach places emphasis on the environment and culture into which children are born, hence the socio-cultural context influenced by the views of Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky. The role of the adult and children's peers are a crucial part of this process in relation to contributing to and maximising children's potential, and how they grow, develop and learn (Bruce, 2015). The 'interactionist' or 'constructivist' perspective has evolved and become more sophisticated, with more evidence becoming available through a culmination of factors which will be considered within this chapter. According to Taylor, Bond and Woods (2013, p.115):

> Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky all share an interest in the relationship between the inner, biological, individual child and the outer, environmental social child – that is, the extent to which a child's knowledge is determined biologically and culturally compared with the child's freedom to act independently and creatively.

However, where they differ is the emphasis on the place of the relationship and the role of the adult within this. For Piaget, children are individuals who attempt to adapt to the world around them. This is through four processes: schemas, assimilation, accommodation and equilibration, which will be discussed on page 127. For Vygotsky, children learn through social engagement with their world and are 'children in society' (Taylor, Bond and Woods, 2013). "Vygotsky proposed two lines of development for the child: the natural line of organic growth and maturation and the line of cultural improvement of the psychological functions. At a certain point they meet up, mediated through speech, and external, cultural knowledge becomes internal" (Taylor, Bond and Woods, 2013, p.116). Bruner's (2006) thinking in relation to how children learn was influenced by Piaget and Vygotsky but his thinking is more closely aligned to Vygotsky's (Taylor, Bond and Woods, 2013). "Although Bruner's child assimilates and accommodates, the nature of mental representation is crucially influenced by the child's social interactions and environment" (Taylor, Bond and Woods, 2013, p.117). Children learn to think in actions (enactively), in pictures (iconically) and in words (symbolically) (Bruner 2006). Vygotsky's and Bruner's thinking will also be explored further on page 128 when looking at the 'Role of the Adult'. Hence, the similarities and differences between these three theorists will be explored throughout this literature review in greater depth, and in particular when looking at pedagogical approaches to the curriculum and the role of the adult.

It can be argued that there has been a growing recognition that the way children are viewed and how they learn are socially and culturally constructed. Additionally, the progress of neuroscience research has made significant advances in studying the brain development of the first five years of a child's life. This has made an important difference to the way children's competence is now perceived (Trevarthen, 1998; Gopnik *et al.,* 1999; Shonkoff and Levitt, 2010). "Recent research, particularly in neuroscience, has pointed to the fact that in the process of caring for and, in the broadest sense, educating young children, no time is too soon to begin, with studies showing that from birth (in fact, even before birth) children are already competent learners" (David *et al.,* 2003, p.10). Curtis (2002) postulates how the pioneers, Froebel, Steiner and Montessori, have all also influenced contemporary views on the importance of the first five years of a child's life and how children learn. According to Bruce (2015), Froebel, Steiner and Montessori were all skilled practitioners as well as being educational thinkers. Based on the thinking of these three pioneers as well as that of Smith Hill, McMillan, Isaacs and the Reggio Emilia approach, Bruce (2015) has developed a list of principles in relation to how young children learn which draw together their thinking based on an interactionalist view. However Bruce (2015) acknowledges that it is important to situate their thinking in the political and historical context in which they lived at that time and that this may have changed in the current ECE context. Bruce (2015) also draws on the theories of Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner (which will be examined further on in this literature review) and has rewritten her original principles based on their thinking. These include:

1. The best way to prepare children for their adult life is to give them what they need as children.
2. Children are whole people who have feelings, ideas, a sense of embodied self and relationships with others, and who need to be physically, mentally, morally and spiritually healthy.
3. Areas of learning involving the humanities, arts and sciences cannot be separated; young children learn in an integrated way and not in neat tidy compartments.
4. Children learn best when they are given appropriate responsibility, allowed to experiment, make errors, decisions and choices, and are respected as autonomous learners.
5. Self-discipline is emphasised as the only kind of discipline worth having. Rewards systems are very short term and do not work in the long term in developing the moral and spiritual aspects of living. Children need their efforts to be valued and appreciated.
6. There are times when children are especially able to learn particular things.
7. What children can do (rather than what they cannot do) is the starting point for a child's learning.
8. Diverse kinds of symbolic behaviour develop and emerge when learning environments conducive to this are created through home and early childhood settings, indoors and outdoors, working together. These include pretend and role play, imagination, creativity and representations through talking/signing, literature, writing,

mathematics, dance, music, the visual arts, drama and scientific hypothesizing.

9. Relationships with other people (both adults and children) are of central importance in a child's life, influencing emotional and social well-being.
10. Quality education is about three things: the child, the context in which learning takes place and the knowledge and understanding which the child develops and learns.

(Bruce, 2015, p.9)

Within these principles, what they have in common is a shared view that children aged three to four should not experience formal learning in pre-school settings and that children should learn in an environment which facilitates their interests. Another shared belief is that they advocate for a child-centred approach to education, believing that pre-school children are intrinsically motivated and have an eagerness to learn and that the context in which learning takes place needs to be considered (Bruce, 2015).

The importance of viewing children holistically in the context of their lives is explored by Hazeerersingh (1989, in Taylor and Woods, 2005, p.xi): "Holistic ideology values the whole child and endeavours to understand each child as a young individual within the context of his or her family, community and culture." Additionally, early years practitioners should endeavour "to be sensitive and responsive to all of a child's needs and aspects of development" (Taylor and Woods, 2005, p.xi). This includes the need to

view all areas of development equally – including physical, moral, spiritual, cultural, language, cognitive, social and emotional; these areas should be inter-related and not seen as isolated areas of development. A holistic approach also advocates equality of opportunity and requires that, regardless of race, culture, sex, gender, personality, ability, family or community, children should be treated with respect and as individuals in their own right. According to Taylor and Woods (2005, p.xi), “Holism goes hand in hand with advocacy of greater co-operation and collaboration between early years professionals.” Therefore, children will experience different childhoods in different communities and in different historical, societal, political and cultural contexts. To demonstrate this interlocking relationship, Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed a series of five concentric circles: microsystem (e.g. school, family), mesosystem (e.g. neighbourhood, peers, religion), exosytem (e.g. parents’ workplace, extended family), macro system (e.g. social, cultural and political influences) and chronosystem (changes over time), and he emphasised the importance of studying ‘development in context’ and "nested ecological structures” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.6). Children can change and shift between the different ‘systems’ based on life experiences and transitions, and therefore do not stand still in terms of place and time.

The influences of inter-connected relationships also resonate with the thinking of Bernstein (1996) in relation to the different experiences children and their families have and “the degree of overlap between their home and school knowledge” (Bernstein, 1996, in Brooker, 2002, p.57). Bernstein

(1996) refers to this as their ‘local’ and ‘official’ knowledge and “believes that this terminology is useful as it distinguishes not what is learned at home from what is learned at school but what is valued at home from what is valued in the school setting” (Bernstein, 1996, in Brooker, 2002, p.57):

> ‘Official knowledge’ (which can lead to school success and power in society and taught in many homes where children are able to adapt to classrooms where they meet expectations to what counts) and ‘local knowledge’ (which is useful within the context of children’s own home but not within the wider society) and specifically in the child’s first non-family setting, the Early Years classroom.

According to Bernstein (2000, p.167), this creates a power imbalance for certain groups in society and “the dominant group [official] is said to impose itself on a dominated group and functions to silence and exclude the voice of this group [local]. The excluded voice is then transformed into a latent pedagogic voice of unrecognised potential.” Bernstein’s theorising about pedagogy between home cultures and school is based upon two concepts; classification and framing. “Classification defines the strengths of the boundaries which exist between categories: between schools and homes, between teachers and pupils, between curriculum subjects, between classroom groups” (Bernstein, 2000, p.31). “Framing regulates the forms of behaviour and communication which are permitted within and between the categories which classification creates” (Brooker, 2002, p.58). Hence, according to Bernstein (2000, p.36), “framing refers to the control on communications in local pedagogical relations: between parents/children and teacher/pupil. If the principle of classification provides us with our voice and

the means of its recognition then the principle of framing is a means of acquiring the legitimate message." Thus, "classification establishes voice and framing establishes the message" (Bernstein, 2000, p.36). Where classification is strong, "we can envisage a school, which is strict about uniform, formal in its teaching methods and precise about assessment arrangements" (Brooker, 2002, p.58) Thus, "where framing is strong, expectations about all aspects of the school and classroom work, behaviour and relationships will be explicit and unambiguous" (Brooker, 2002, p.58). This means that "where strong classification and strong framing are combined, a more formal traditional mode of schooling results. The pedagogy is fully explicit and is said to be visible" (Brooker, 2002, p.58). Furthermore, "where both classification and framing are weak then a very informal or progressive mode of schooling results – the pedagogy is very implicit and is described as invisible" (Brooker, 2002, p.58). This is illustrated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 An Illustration of Bernstein's visible and invisible pedagogy

	School knowledge	Local knowledge
Visible pedagogy	Explicit instruction in the school curriculum (e.g. ABC learned by rote and recited, ABC books taught)	Explicit instruction in a non-school curriculum (e.g. mosque, Sunday school, Urdu classes)
Invisible pedagogy	Implicit instruction in the school curriculum (e.g. fridge magnets, nursery rhyme CDs, DVDs)	Implicit instruction in a non-school curriculum (apprenticeship into home and family routines and responsibilities)

(Brooker, 2002, p.77)

In relation to this investigation, it could be argued that finding a balance between ‘school knowledge’ and ‘local knowledge’ is a challenge for both Swedish and English pre-school settings, as both countries have a diverse range of children accessing pre-schools, with ‘local’ knowledge being embedded into both the pre-school curricula. The EYFS (DfE, 2017, p.5) states that “it should seek to provide equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.” The Swedish pre-school curriculum also stipulates that the pre-school should “co-operate with the home concerning the child’s upbringing, and discuss with parents the rules and attitudes in the preschool” (Lpfö, 2010, p.11). This suggests that the Swedish pre-school curriculum is incorporating and bringing together ‘local’ and ‘school knowledge' by working with parents and embracing home cultures with the pre-school curriculum. The starting school age, however, may be a major factor in this dissonance, with practitioners feeling inclined to get children ready for their ‘next steps’ and ‘top down’ pressures (Rose and Rogers, 2012a) and implementing a more ‘visible’ curriculum. As mentioned on page 67, the Swedish pre-school curriculum (Lpfö, 2018) has introduced goals for English, literacy and science which was not in the previous curriculum, therefore a more formal ‘visible’ curriculum being evident for Swedish practitioners. This is arguably, however, particularly an issue for English practitioners with children starting school when they are aged four, “despite evidence that children who start formal schooling at a later age eventually outstrip English children in academic achievement” (Whetton *et al*., 2008; Rignall and Sharp, 2008, in Rose and Rogers, 2012a, p.44). Therefore the challenge is to include and make the

curriculum accessible and purposeful for all children by practitioners narrowing the gap between 'local knowledge' and the pedagogical approaches that they implement, which should be based on a combination of visible and invisible pedagogies. These pedagogies should incorporate the needs of children, their families and the wider community in which children are situated. This includes embracing cultural diversity and mutual respect and an interest in children's home cultures as well as providing an environment which represents these through resources, images and celebration of their uniqueness.

In summary, when considering how children learn across different countries and cultures, Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013) agree that children's learning and development cannot be generalised and that it is dangerous to impose ideas from one culture onto another. Therefore, how children learn is 'situated' within the context in which they find themselves. This is also echoed by Walsh (2005) (in Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.6): "Child development is not simply a matter of individual cognition but a process of growing into a culture." This again suggests that children's needs are 'contextualised' and their views need to be valued and considered in early years settings.

3.5 The Rights of the Child

The literature around social constructs of childhood invites the conclusion that childhood cannot be viewed as a universal definition or construct, as there are variations between different cultures. According to James, Jenks

and Prout (1998, p.23), pre-sociological models of the child are made up of different perspectives such as classical philosophy, developmental psychology and psychoanalysis. These models use labels such as: 'the evil child', 'the innocent child', 'the immanent child', 'the naturally developing child' and 'the unconscious child.' These pre-sociological models of the child are instructive and reveal how views of childhood are different, but they also demonstrate how childhood has been and is still imagined and informs everyday actions and practices. However, following this and theorising about childhood, further models of this have taken precedence, such as the model of the socially developing child which links closely to children's cognitive maturation found in developmental psychology. According to James, Jenks and Prout (1998, p.23), this perspective has a focus on a child in a social context and this model represents "an epistemological break between what we have termed pre-sociological accounts of the child and sociological approaches which follow." According to James, Jenks and Prout (1998, p.26), this is "what is now called social constructivism … [T]he approach has three major landmarks in the work of Jenks (1982), Stainton Rogers (1989) and James and Prout (2014). "Social constructivists draw on the knowledge of the child and its life world depends on the predispositions of a consciousness constituted in relation to our social, political, historical and moral context" (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998, p.27). What this suggests is that childhood is a dynamic concept, depending to a great extent upon the context in which it is defined and the philosophical premise upon which it is based. Some theorists argue that childhood is "neither a natural nor universal feature of human groups but appears as a specific structural and

cultural component of many societies" (James and Prout, 2014, p.8). Others suggest that it is appropriate to view it as "children who live within a defined area – whether in terms of time, space, economics or other relevant criteria [and who] have a number of characteristics in common" (Qvortrup *et al.,* 1994, p.5). The 'contextualised' child refers to the importance of taking into account a child's cultural and social environment and how that may impact upon development. This also links to the thinking of Bronfenbrenner (1979, p. xiii) (as previously mentioned on page 75):

> For the different environments were producing discernible differences, not only across but within societies, in talent, temperament, human relations, and particularly in the ways in which the culture, or subculture, brought up its next generation. The process and product of making human beings being human clearly varied by place and time.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory has been highly influential regarding this, and has motivated a growing number of communities to focus on the need for greater collaboration between children, families and service providers. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the societal landscape fuels and steers children's development. What this suggests is that these 'layers' have an effect on a child's development, and a change or conflict in one system will ripple throughout other layers. Porter (2003, p.6) supports this and states that "children develop because of, rather than in, their environments." James and James (2017, p.32) believe that "childhood is a social construction and there is no such thing as a single childhood, rather a multiplicity of childhoods. The interdisciplinary approach to the understanding of childhood has coalesced around the label of 'childhood studies.'"

Taking this further and in more depth, to what extent do childhood perspectives, the way adults relate to children and the way children see themselves, continue to change? According to James and James (2017), changes in attitudes in relation to childhood being a social construction have led to:

> A thorny issue of how so many different childhoods are produced and sustained, particularly in the context of the pressures generated by the growth of discourses about the globalisation of childhood and children's rights in the wake of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
>
> (James and James, 2017, p.93)

According to UNICEF (1990 p.4) there are four articles in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) that are seen as 'special'. Together, they form the 'General Principle'. They help in interpreting all the other articles and play a fundamental role in realising all the rights in the convention for all children. They are:

- Non-discrimination (article 2)
- Best interest of the child (article 3)
- Right to life, survival and development (article 6)
- Right to be heard (article 12).

In summary, key points from UNCRC are that children must be viewed as active, engaged participants in their lives and in society. Furthermore the child should have rights of agency, the right to take part in family decisions, the right to make decision about their future (not forced to do what parents want them to do), and the right to their own opinion. Dahlberg, Moss and

Pence (2013) agree with this, and when relating this to early childhood settings, they believe that teachers often say that they are taking the perspective of the child and that their practice is child centred but very often, in practice, this can be problematic. They go on to say that:

> The term child centred might be thought to embody a particular modernist understanding of the child, as a unified, reified and essentialised subject at the centre of the world … the post-modernist perspective by contrast would decentre the child, viewing the child as existing through its relations with others and always in a particular context.
>
> (Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 2013, p.46)

From a post-modern perspective, Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013) consider that there is no such thing as 'the child' or 'childhood' waiting to be discovered, defined and realised, but that there are many understandings of what childhood should be, and practitioners have choices to make. These choices are highly significant and they determine the institutions we [society] provide for children and the pedagogical approaches and experiences pre-school children have. Thus Dahlberg *et al.* (2013, pp.52-53) agree with the views of James and Prout (2014), that there is a new sociology of childhood; they argue that "children are part of, but also separate from, the family with their own interests that may not always coincide with those of parents and other adults" (Dahlberg *et al.,* 2013, p.52). Dahlberg *et al.,* (2013, pp.52-53) consider several aspects of the new paradigm in the sociology of childhood, including:

- Childhood is a social construction, constructed both for and by children, within an actively negotiated web of social relations. While

childhood is a biological fact, the way in which it is understood is socially determined;

- Childhood, as a social construction, is always contextualised in relation to time, place and culture and varies according to class, gender and other socioeconomic conditions. There is, therefore, neither a natural nor universal childhood, nor indeed a natural or universal child, but many childhoods and children;
- Children are social actors, participating in constructing and determining their own lives but also the lives of those around them and the societies in which they live, and contributing to learning as agents building on experiential knowledge. In short, they have agency;
- Children's social relationships and cultures are worthy of study in their own right;
- Children have a voice of their own and should be listened to as a means of taking them seriously, involving them in democratic dialogue and decision making and understanding childhood;
- Children contribute to social resources and production and are not simply a cost and burden;
- Relationships between adults and children involve the exercise of power (as well as the expression of love). It is necessary to take account of the way in which adult power is maintained and used, as well as of children's resilience and resistance to that power.

In conclusion, what Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013) suggest is a framework which adopts the view of the child as a social constructor from the

start of life, of knowledge, of culture and of their own identity. This echoes the approach in Reggio Emilia (in Northern Italy) and the views of Malaguzzi (in Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 2013, p.46) that this "produces children who are rich in potential, strong, powerful and competent".

The EYFS (DfE, 2017) in England states that children have a right, as spelled out in the UNCRC, to provision which enables them to develop their personalities, talents and abilities irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities or gender. Moreover, the Swedish Pre-School Curriculum (Lpfö, 2010) refers to the rights of the child in its fundamental values as it states:

> The preschool aims at children acquiring and developing knowledge and values. It should promote all children's development and learning and a lifelong desire to learn. An important task of the preschool is to impart and establish respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is based. Each and every person working in the preschool should promote respect.
>
> (Lpfö, 2010, p.3)

The Swedish pre-school curriculum also emphasises that pre-schools should prepare children for participating in and sharing the responsibilities, rights and obligations that apply in a democratic society (Lpfö, 2010, p.16). This links to the views of James and James (2017) and the 'debate' regarding structure and agency. According to James and James (2017, p.81), "this debate is in essence, a struggle to evaluate the competing claims made about the extent to which individuals can act independent of the social structures and institutions which make up the societies in which they live."

The idea of structure lends itself to understanding social relationships at a macro level (which can be linked to the views of Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Vygotsky, 1987; Habermas, 1987), while agency focuses on the micro level (Blumer, 1998), "suggesting both a rigid dichotomy and an unbridgeable conceptual gap" (James and James 2017, p.33). Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013) argue that Reggio Emilia, for example, (which will be discussed in more detail on page 121) underpins Swedish early years pedagogy and is embedded with a combination of structure and agency. They state that "while structure can be legislated for, agency cannot be, coming instead from individual commitment and struggle" (Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 2013, p.17). What this suggests, therefore, is that teachers within pre-school settings can reflect, explore and deepen their knowledge and understanding of their pedagogical approaches and their image of the child. Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013, p.17) go even further by affirming that, while individual pre-school teachers reflect on their practice in the pre-school, they "consider participation in relation to children, families, educators and form a strong relationship to their own community." In summary, what Dahlberg, Moss and Pence are suggesting is an approach to early years education where individuals, groups and the community create an interlocking dialogic space for developing new types of conversations and practices. What this claims is that teachers need to consider how children learn from a socio-cultural perspective, and to consider their individual, family and community needs in relation to the learning experiences they offer within a pre-school setting. This is a recurring theme throughout each chapter of this thesis – taking a socio-cultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978). In addition to valuing

the rights of the child, providing opportunities for children to develop socially and interact with their peers, and forming sustainable relationships within the pre-school environment, are of vital importance and will be considered next.

3.6 Relationships

According to Broadhead (2013), “Some have argued that play is children’s work but I would say that it is far more than this. Play is their self-actualisation, a holistic exploration of who and what they are and know and of who and what they might become” (Broadhead 2013, p.89). This is echoed by Vygotsky, who also emphasised the extent to which a child’s behaviour is merged and rooted in social behaviour and the relationships that children have (Ivich, 1994; Vygotsky, 1987). Moreover, Vygotsky (1987, p.57) also believed that “social relations or relations among people genetically underline all higher functions and their relationships.” He further argued that through social interactions between the growing child and other members of that community, the child gains the ‘tools’ of thinking and learning. Vygotsky (1978) believed that children develop in a social matrix and that this is formed by the interconnection of social relationships and interactions between themselves and other children. As summarised by Wertsch (1985, p.164):

> In the process of development, children begin to use the same forms of behaviour in relation to themselves and others initially used in relation to them. Children master the social forms of behaviour and transfer these forms to themselves … It is through others that we develop into ourselves and … this is true not only with regard to the individual but with regard to the history of every function.

Additionally, Dewey (1897, p.53), in his first publication 'My Pedagogical Creed', says, "I believe that all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race." Dewey (1897, p.53) also believed that "the only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself." Dewey (1897) felt that the child's own instincts and powers are the starting point of any education, and if the adult intervenes "it will result in friction, or disintegration, or arrest of the child's nature" (Dewey, 1897, p.77). Furthermore, when writing about what the content of a curriculum for early years should include, Dewey (1897) refers to this as being derived from a social institution, and that education is a social process. The adult, therefore, is not there to impose certain ideas or values but as a member of the community is one of several people who will socially influence a child's development. Moreover, according to Peltzman (1998, p.52), "Dewey organised the classroom into a community with children in cooperation with each other." Additionally, the classroom is a 'model of group living' in which children initiate activities, projects and play; and there they learn by discovery with a teacher who facilitates their learning and fosters their innate drive by means of a stimulating environment (Dewey, 1897). Therefore Dewey's perspectives are based on a progressive view of education where children's interests, needs and abilities are at the centre of any early years curriculum (Peltzman, 1998). This also involves knowing the children and

providing first hand experiences with a strong emphasis on problem-solving and critical thinking (Dewey, 1897).

Subsequently, according to O'Donnell and King (2009), there is some disagreement as to whether or not Piaget understood the importance of social experiences, presenting a view of cognitive development that is too biological and individualistic. However, O'Donnell and King (2009, p.5) note that in his earlier work "Piaget did emphasise the value of peer experiences as an important factor in cognitive development." They also argue, however, that in a classroom situation, Piaget's view of children making meaning with their peers would be different than if someone had worked alone (O'Donnell and King, 2009). All the same, Vygotsky (1987) placed a far greater emphasis on peer relationships, and believed that peer collaboration and dialogue were more effective when working across different levels of expertise, which he termed the 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD); this will be considered on page 129. According to Morgan (2010, in Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.510), "Communicative exchanges with the social world shape young children's cognitive development…we become ourselves though others." Thus, Vygotsky's thinking is underpinned by children learning through social relationships and collaboration with others and being able to 'connect'.

Additionally, Bertram and Pascal (2002, p.246) reiterate that early years teachers are responsible for establishing sustaining relationships with others; they endeavour to stimulate relationship competencies through creating

activities and implementing strategies that require turn taking, sharing, helping others and more. This resonates with the idea of the 'caring professional' as stipulated by Rose and Rogers (2012). This is where early years practitioners promote caring practices and "nurturing relationships is through a process known as 'interactional synchrony'" (Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.34). Although there are various definitions of 'interactional synchrony', Rose and Rogers (2012, p.34) define it as "the interpersonal relationship between caregiver and child in which the 'Carer' sensitively tunes into the cared-for child in a response way which is 'in sync' with the child's needs and interests." There is strong evidence to suggest that 'interactional synchrony' between children and adults plays a significant role in promoting later development such as attachment theory, self-regulation and advanced language" (Feldman *et al*., 1999, in Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.34). This suggests that such intimate and 'safe' relationships support children in developing secure attachments not only with their parents but practitioners as well. 'Interactional synchrony' supports children in developing attachments through early years settings by providing a secure, safe base for children to be able to explore their environment but knowing they have a 'carer' there to support them. This involves 'tuning in' to a synchronous state of reciprocal relationships through 'attunement' and being responsive to children's needs through 'empathetic responsiveness' (Rose and Rogers, 2012). What this advocates is that by supporting children's emotions and empowering them to be confident and explore their environment, they will be supported in managing new experiences, taking risks and adapting to new situations. It also enables children to be confident

learners. ‘Interactional synchrony’ also links to the idea of a ‘relational pedagogy’, which will be considered on page 131.

According to Bandura (1986), social behaviours can be learnt by observing others. Bandura (1977) built on behaviourist theories but added several more ideas: first, behaviour is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning; second, mediating processes occur between stimuli and responses; and third, behaviour is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning. Interestingly, and building on this further, Bandura (1977) believed that children in an early years setting are more likely to copy the behaviour of those they see as similar to themselves, including in terms of gender. The child will also, according to Bandura (1977), decide by observing others whether to copy that behaviour, and will identify whether they or the person they are observing are rewarded or punished. Therefore, according to Bandura (1977), identification occurs with another person (the model) and involves taking on (or adopting) observed behaviours, values, beliefs and attitudes of the person with whom they are identifying. As Dunn (1993, p.114) concludes, early years teachers need to also be mindful that “relationships change in nature as children grow up. New dimensions of intimacy, self-disclosure and shared intimacy become apparent over the early years, reflecting children’s growing social understanding. These developments bring new sources and new patterns of individual differences in as close relationships as children develop.”

The EYFS (DfE, 2017, p.8) agrees, saying that:

> Children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class and understand and follow the rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations and take changes of routine in their stride.

Children are also encouraged to "make relationships with other children [and] play co-operatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings and form positive relationships with adults and other children" (DfE, 2017, p.8).

According to the Swedish curriculum (Lpfö, 2010, p.7), "The preschool should take into account and develop children's ability to take responsibility and develop their social preparedness so that solidarity and tolerance are established at an early stage." Furthermore, the preschool "should encourage and strengthen the child's compassion and empathy for the situations of others." Both the English and Swedish pre-school curricula mention showing empathy and sensitivity towards others, as well as forming positive relationships and developing tolerance of others. As echoed by the DfE (2017, p.16), "Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them." Bronfenbrenner (1979, in Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.33) refers to "nurturing relationships which are brought about by caring, trusting, and mutually respectful acts." Therefore a

nurturing relationship “is attentive, responsive and gives thoughtful consideration to those who are cared for, providing the basis for lifelong caring attitudes” (Brooker, 2010, in Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.33). To enable children to develop positive relationships, this needs to be promoted through a well-planned and purposeful learning environment, which will now be explored.

3.7 Learning Environment

It is generally agreed that young children should access an early years environment where they can thrive, and which offers a range of activities that stimulate their interests and curiosity. According to Wild *et al.* (2018, p.2), “In order to provide nurturing and enabling environments for young children to learn and flourish emotionally and socially as well as cognitively, it is imperative that teachers and practitioners make well informed and thoughtful decisions about the experiences they provide for young children in their care.” Blenkin and Kelly (1997), based on a project entitled ‘Principles into Practice in Early Childhood Education’, also believe that:

> The planning of educational provision for the early years must not only be recognised as pivotal in relation to later development, it must also be seen as requiring a different approach, a different set of planning – and evaluative – criteria; it must have its own canons of excellence and criteria of success…it must have the courage to stand by them.
>
> (Blenkin and Kelly, 1997, p.x)

This emphasises how important the planning of the environment is for young children, but also that practitioners will have their own beliefs regarding effective practice – and they need to be able to justify and stand by these

beliefs and values. Linking to the conceptual framework for this investigation, the learning environment provided by early years practitioners will be 'situated' depending on the social, cultural and political context of the children they are working with. Thus, developing relationships with children and knowing and understanding their individual needs is of paramount importance when considering an appropriate learning environment. As previously mentioned, there are tensions that exist between what is an appropriate curriculum for young children and the pedagogical approaches used, and the role that play has within this. In England, 'Enabling Environments' is one of the four guiding principles underpinning the EYFS (DfE, 2017, p.6); it states that "children learn and develop well in enabling environments in which their experiences respond to their individual needs." Enabling environments, like DAP, "value all people [and] value learning; they offer stimulating resources, relevant to all the children's cultures and communities, rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching [and] support for children to take risks and explore" (DfE 2014, p.2). According to Rose and Rogers (2012, p.122), "All adults working in early years settings, whatever the size or nature of the group, will be engaged in creative acts of observation-led-planning for appropriate provision." Anning *et al.* (2009), Wood and Attfield (2005) and Taylor and Woods (2005) all highlight the important role that early years teachers have in supporting children's learning and development through a play based and stimulating learning environment.

When reflecting on the Swedish pre-school curriculum in relation to the learning environment, Lohmander and Pramling Samuelson (2015) state that it is underpinned by a socio-cultural and experienced-based approach, where children are seen as active participants in their own development and learning. They also state that democracy is the underpinning value, and although the curriculum specifies overriding goals and tasks, it does not articulate the means to reach those goals. Early years teachers are expected to use their professional knowledge and judgement about how best to achieve those goals and the learning experiences they feel are most appropriate for children's learning and development. According to Lohmander and Pramling Samuelson (2015), play is an important dimension of pre-school pedagogy in Sweden and although in the revised pre-school curriculum and in 2010 the term 'learning' is now highlighted, the curriculum still gives prominence to play: "The preschool should provide children with a secure environment at the same time as it challenges them and encourages play and activity" (Lpfö, 2010, p.9). "Play is important for the child's development and learning. Conscious use of play to promote the development and learning of each individual child should always be present in preschool activities" (Lpfö, 2010, p.3). Moreover, the revised curriculum (Lpfö, 2010) compared to the previous version (Lpfö, 1998) focuses on a pedagogical approach in which care, socialisation and learning form a coherent whole. According to Lohmander and Pramling Samuelson (2015), this has generated three challenges for early years teachers in Sweden. Firstly, teachers have to focus on the learning aspect of teaching while still keeping care, play and wellbeing at the centre of the work. Secondly, it is

not clear what constitutes learning content or learning objects for children in various areas, as many teachers were trained before the new curriculum came in and teaching content was not part of their studies. Thirdly, there is a challenge to keep care and education integrated and not separate. In a study by Lohmander and Lofqvist (2015), teachers did not always frame learning in a structured way and were not aware of the knowledge children were supposed to acquire in a given situation. Additionally, some Swedish pre-schools seem to lack structured, goal-oriented learning activities, and children seem to be playing all the time. This suggests that the pedagogy seems to be 'invisible' to some of the Swedish teachers who were part of this research.

In relation to current policy in England, in the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2017, p.9) it could be argued that the pedagogy is 'visible': "Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity … Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others" and "children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults." The EYFS also states that "in planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice" (DfE, 2017, p.10). However, although it could be concluded that the EYFS in England is a play-based curriculum framework, the dominant discourse running through the documentation – unlike the Swedish pre-school curricula (Lpfö, 2010) – promotes play that is

well planned, purposeful and potentially instructive. Therefore, unlike Swedish teachers, English teachers have a challenge to meet adult determined goals from play and at the same time engage children in meaningful and intrinsically motivating play activities. In a study by MacNaughton and Williams (2004), teachers felt that play should be owned and controlled by the children; and even when teachers made suggestions to extend or complicate the play they believed that children had the right to choose whether or not to pursue suggestions. This again reflects back to the view that it is the underpinning values of the teacher and the pedagogical practices that they implement within the pre-school setting that make a difference. According to Rogers (2010, p.6), "There appear to be inherent and widespread difficulties both conceptual and practical, in realising the potential benefits of play, what I have termed here a conflict of interests between the competing imperatives of play in early childhood pedagogy." Rogers (2010) suggests that teachers rethink their views and understanding of pedagogy (their values) and play (the experiences they feel children should have). Rogers (2010) believes that play is generally seen as something spontaneous, intrinsically motivated and based on the child's interests; and pedagogy is seen as the adults' role in providing a learning environment and strategies that support the process of teaching and learning.

A study by Bennett, Wood and Rogers (1997) found that teachers had a general reluctance to engage in children's play, and an expectation that children will demonstrate independence and autonomy in their play. Several

early years researchers (David *et al.,* 2003; Rogers and Evans, 2008; Wood, 1998) have called for new pedagogies of play that recognise the complexity as well as the potential of play for teaching and learning. Moreover, a new pedagogy of play requires pre-school teachers to have "comprehensive and sophisticated understandings of play grounded in research as well as practice that reflect the relevant social and cultural contexts" (Rogers, 2011, p.44).

Drake (2009, in Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.122) defines early years provision as "a structure which scaffolds children's learning but also allows them the freedom to experiment, investigate and pursue personal interests." However Rose and Rogers (2012, p.122) argue that "rather than a scaffolding structure, which is fixed and rigid, the enabling environment is co-constructive – that is it is flexible, permeable and responsive." Rose and Rogers (2012) also suggest that children need to be part of the shaping and planning of their learning environment to make it based around their own interests and needs. Through dialogue and 'intersubjectivity', as discussed earlier in relation to Rogoff (2003) and Habermas (1987), the learning environment will become meaningful and purposeful, with children having ownership over their own learning. As Rose and Rogers (2012, p.122) argue, such reciprocal and co-constructive approaches, where adults "share control of the environment and intentions for learning with the children, provide the starting point for creating an enabling learning environment." Thus an enabling environment will also enable children to learn through accessing appropriate resources and spaces which celebrate free flow play

and where children follow their own interests. In concurrence with this, Anning, Cullen and Fleer (2009) advocate that one of the fundamental principles in early childhood education is the importance of play in children's learning and development – a pedagogy of play. This can be defined as:

> The ways in which early childhood professionals make provision for play and playful approaches to learning and teaching, how they design play/learning environments and all the pedagogical decisions, techniques and strategies they use to support or enhance learning and teaching through play … home based pedagogies of play and the ways in which children act as playful pedagogues in their self-initiated activities.
>
> (Anning, Cullen and Fleer, 2009, p.27)

This definition again echoes the importance of the learning environment and the way practitioners provide space and opportunities for children's learning and development to grow through play. Thus the benefits of play are summarised by Bruce (2015, p.6), who states that:

> Play transforms children because it helps them to function beyond the here and now. They can become involved in more abstract thinking about the past, using the past, and into imagining the future, or alternative ways of doing things. It helps them to problem solve, and to experiment. It helps them to work out what they think and feel.

There is also substantial evidence that through play "children demonstrate improved verbal communication, high levels of social and interaction skills, creative use of play materials, imaginative and divergent thinking skills and problem-solving capabilities" (Anning et al., 2009, p.30). This proposes that an effective learning environment can develop children's social skills,

creativity abilities and their ability to problem solve. It also emphasises, as did Rose and Rogers (2012), the importance of children initiating their own play and learning experiences.

Claxton and Carr (2004, in Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.126) identify four types of environment that adults can create for young children:

- A prohibiting environment
- An affording environment
- An inviting environment
- A potentiating environment.

According to Claxton and Carr (2004, in Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.126), 'A prohibiting environment' is "tightly controlled by adults and provides an activity schedule where there is little time for children to be engaged over a sustained period of time." 'An affording environment' is one which offers children an array of opportunities but with few deliberate strategies on the adult's part to draw children's attention to potential learning opportunities. 'An inviting environment' is one which not only affords the opportunity for learning but in which adults draw attention to its value and interest. Finally, 'a potentiating environment' "identif[ies] children's dispositions but also involves frequent participation and shared activity and shares the power between teachers and learners" (Claxton and Carr, 2004, in Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.126). Drawing on the work of Wenger (1998), Claxton and Carr (2004)

suggest that adults need to balance two main processes in creating and sustaining ‘a potentiating’ learning environment:

> The first of these is ‘reification’ which means to make experiences in a concrete way. The second process is ‘participation’, which resonates with socially just practices and places relationships at the heart of the learning process and the development of a shared understanding between adults and children and between children.
>
> (Claxton and Carr, 2004, in Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.127)

It could be argued that ‘a potentiating environment’ links to the underpinning ethos of Reggio Emilia in relation to the adults and children engaging in meaningful conversations about what they are thinking and feeling. As previously mentioned, in Reggio Emilia the environment is described as the ‘third educator’; this approach suggests that the environment should promote relationships, communication and collaboration by means of exploration through play (Gandini, 2005). As advocated by Malaguzzi (in Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.121), “What children learn does not follow as an automatic result from what is taught … Rather, it is in large part due to the children’s own doing as a consequence of their activities and our resources.” What this suggests is that the adult’s role is to provide the appropriate materials and resources, and how children use these and make meaning from them is based on their individual ideas, thought processes and how they choose to manipulate and apply the materials offered to them. This suggests that children need to have ownership over their learning based on child-centred practices (Rose and Rogers, 2012). The adult’s role is to provide resources, natural materials and an environment in which children can express

themselves freely. The benefits of an enabling outdoor environment will now be considered.

3.8 The Outdoor Environment

According to Davies and Hamilton (2016, p.117), “Outdoor learning is not a new perspective; there have been many scholars who have endorsed the benefits of the outside environment as a natural place for children to explore and discover that the outdoors offers a multitude of new experiences.” Additionally, McMillan (1925, p.1) believed that “the best kept classroom and the richest cupboard are roofed only by the sky”, and she also felt that the outdoor environment encourages learning in all domains of development (McMillan, 1919). Moreover, according to Johnson, Christie and Wardle (2005), early years teachers recognise the importance of outdoor play for young children; pre-school children need outdoor play spaces that provide opportunities for social, cognitive, emotional and physical development. Such play choices include pretend play, social play, sand play and physical play, for example, pedalling wheeled vehicles or vigorous play in large open spaces (Frost, Wortham and Reifel, 2005). Waite (2011) echoes this, saying that many argue that the benefits to learning and development are so significant that an indoor based education alone is not enough to educate children to their potential. In agreement, Knight (2013) stipulates that there is considerable justification for turning our attention towards outdoor environments as a site for young children’s play and learning. In general, throughout Western Europe, facilities for play and opportunities for free play outdoors are declining (Fjørtoft, 2004). There is growing statistical evidence

that children spend increasing amounts of time inside at the expense of time playing outside (Learning Through Landscapes, 2014), and play in natural areas and wild spaces has become rare with more and more children not being able to explore such spaces. It is evident that opportunities for outdoor play have become much more restricted over the last three decades due to a rise in traffic, the greater institutionalisation of childhood (breakfast and after school clubs, etc.) and parents' safety concerns (Holloway and Valentine, 2000; Burke, 2005). Casey (2007) contends that children have a need for regular time and space to play in a varied and interesting physical environment in order to draw on their own resources, develop their identity and social relations, connect to the community and have contact with nature and physical activity. Play England (2018) suggests that outdoor play should also provide children with challenge and risk-taking, and there should be opportunities to play safely with natural elements (earth, water, fire), opportunities for movement (running, jumping, climbing), stimulation of the five senses and experience of change in the environment. This is echoed by Thomas and Harding (in White, 2014, p.12) who advocate that "outdoor play matters to children because it offers alternative opportunities for physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual growth compared to the built environment." Casey (2007) argues that the outdoor environment should be thought of as a place that offers a range of opportunities, rather than being purely a set of physical features. As a result of restricted access to outdoor environments, Waller (2006) claims that for many children, opportunities for play in natural environments (such as beaches, forests, mountains and riversides) have become ever more valuable and significant.

The benefits of the outdoor natural learning environment for children's development have indeed influenced many early years curricular policies and pedagogy in many countries, most notably Scandinavian countries such as Sweden, Finland and Norway (Knight, 2013; Waller et al., 2014). Knight (2013) refers to the concept of 'Forest Schools' and how this started from a visit to Denmark where groups of children were playing outside in the woodland. This approach to outdoor play was developed in the 1950s in Denmark and then in Sweden. The Swedish version of forest school is called 'Skogsmulle' and is available to all pre-school children for three hours daily. "The children learn to walk, run, balance, climb, scramble and swing. They also learn about their environment and how to look after it through play, as well as how to respect each other's personal space (Joyce, 2004, in Knight, 2013, p.5). There are debates among early years teachers regarding how to express and define what forest school is. However, The Forest School Trainers Network (2011, p.6) define Forest School as:

> An inspirational process, that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve [and] develop confidence and self-esteem, through hands on learning experiences in a local woodland or natural environment with trees … Forest School is a specialised approach that sits within and complements the wider context of outdoor and woodland learning.

This is echoed in the Swedish pre-school curriculum (Lpfö, 2010, p.7) which states:

> Children should be able to switch activities during the course of the day. Preschool should provide scope for the child's own plans, imagination and creativity in play and learning, both indoors and outdoors. Time spent outdoors should provide opportunities for play and other activities, both in planned and natural environments.

In relation to the English context regarding outdoor play, 'The Rumbold Report' (DES, 1990, p.7) was the first report which talked about the importance of the outdoor environment in England and recognised the outdoors as an extension of the classroom. The report acknowledged that there are, "certain facilities [that] are essential for the education and care of young children, for example access to an outdoor play area, adjacent toilets, space; young children need equipment that is appropriate and promotes their learning." More recently, the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2017, p.30) also emphasised the importance of the outdoor environment: "Providers must provide access to an outdoor play area or, if that is not possible, ensure that outdoor activities are planned and taken on a daily basis." This supports the views of Waite, Davis and Brown (2006, p.5) who point out that "outdoor learning is not a single entity but comprises many different sorts of activities each with distinct purposes. Outdoor environments afford opportunities for a balance between adult-led structured activities and giving children access to interesting outdoor spaces." However, Ford and Davenport (2019, p.15) draw attention to the fact that, in England:

> The term 'forest school' has taken on a life of its own. People are calling anything outdoorsy a forest school when it should be something held over a long period of time, be about child-centred learning and be engagement with the natural world.

They claim that forest schools “focus on children being guided by their own curiosity rather than completing tasks set by the teacher. They are learning through play and discovery, collaboration and risk taking, climbing trees and using knives.” Ford and Davenport (2019) believe that ‘Forest Schools’ should be offering children another way of learning and address the challenge that practitioners may have (predominantly in England) in setting the child ‘free’ during forest school activities.

In terms of outdoor pedagogy, Waller (2007) has identified four significant issues related to the role of the adult in the outdoor environment. He states that, first, there is no clear guidance on outdoor pedagogy; second, adults and children may have different perceptions of outdoor spaces; third, children benefit from outdoor play and learning both within the setting and outside in natural ‘wild’ environments; and fourth, the role of the practitioner in outside environments is not clear.

This suggests that it is possible that children view outdoor environments differently from adults. In support of this, a study by Cullen (1993) showed that children’s use and opinion of outdoor play was different from adults. She argued that children perceived outdoor play as something they did without assistance of an adult and that adults were rarely seen as interacting with children in ways that would extend their skills. Furthermore, research in Norway by Fjørtoft and Sageie (2000, p. 85) suggests that “as adults we

perceive the landscape as forms, whereas children will interpret the landscape and terrain as functions." The concept of 'children's spaces' proposed by Moss and Petrie (2002, p.8) is significant here, as "within children's spaces there is therefore recognition of the need for privacy and to create opportunities and environments where children have freedom to play away from adults." In particular, Moss and Petrie (2002) suggest that children's spaces such as outside environments allow children to exercise agency, to participate in their own decisions, actions and meaning making, which may or may not involve them engaging with adults. Cullen (1993) proposes a multiple role for teachers, and the findings from the 'Effective Provision of Pre-School Education' (EPPE) (DfE, 2015a) research identified a key role for practitioners to engage in 'sustained shared thinking' with young children (which will be explained in more depth on page 126); and it may be that outdoor spaces are ideal contexts for this type of interaction. This approach requires adults to take a more active participatory role in supporting children's development rather than a didactic role, thus fostering a positive relationship between the adult and child, generating purposeful interactions. These interactions define learning in a social context, where the child engages with more expert others, enabling the child to become more knowledgeable (Vygotsky, 1978).

The role of the pre-school teacher in the outdoor environment clearly involves both sensitive interventions and allowing children freely chosen activities without any intervention (DfE, 2015a; Sylva and Pugh, 2005). The literature also suggests that questions still remain about how teachers are

trained for this role in outdoor environments. Knight (2013) and Glazzard *et al.* (2014), argue that the most effective training in achieving higher levels of engagement and improved outcomes for learners is that which helps teachers to recognise their role as facilitators who base their learning around children's interests and the outdoor environment. As Fjørtoft (2001) and Waite *et al.* (2006) point out, there has been limited research on how natural spaces function as a learning environment for young children and there needs to be much further reported research on what actually happens in these environments.

3.9 Conclusion to the Chapter

In summary, it can be concluded that the importance of children developing reciprocal, nurturing relationships with adults and their peers is beneficial to their development. Children also need to be part of a play based pedagogical environment which values their views, needs and interests. This is important not only in terms of the indoor learning environment but for the outdoor environment too, where children need freedom to pursue their own interests and ideas. An enabling environment which includes a variety of developmentally appropriate resources and materials is also imperative for young children's learning and development.

Chapter Four– Literature Review – Pedagogical Approaches in Early Years

4.1 Introduction to the Chapter

This section of the literature review again addresses Research Question Two and focuses upon the meaning of pedagogy as well as pedagogical approaches to the curriculum and the role of the adult in pre-school setting contexts. It draws upon a range of literature and also situates this within a socio-cultural framework of Swedish and English pre-schools.

4.2 The Meaning of Pedagogy

The meaning of pedagogy and how this underpins pre-school teachers' practice is a central theme of this investigation. There are wide variations and views across the world in relation to the term and meaning of the word 'pedagogy'. It could be argued that all teachers have 'pedagogy', or a cluster of pedagogical notions, and during the course of the pre-school day, different pedagogical strategies and approaches are required (Athey, 2007). This is largely determined by the underpinning pedagogical ideologies and values held by teachers. Furthermore, although at times the use of the terms curriculum and pedagogy appear indistinguishable, the curriculum denotes what is to be taught, and the 'art of teaching' commonly referred to as 'pedagogy' refers to how it is to be taught (Athey, 2007). Leach and Moon (2008) define pedagogy as "a dynamic process informed by theories, beliefs and dialogues only realised in the daily interaction of learners and teachers in real settings" (Leach and Moon, 2008, p. 6). This definition of pedagogy captures the complex, interactive, multidimensional aspects of pedagogy and

how it is shaped by teachers' values. A recent definition of pedagogy, which is a theme through the European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) book series, also acknowledges pedagogy as being underpinned by teachers' practical knowledge which is constructed in situated action in dialogue with beliefs (theories) and (principles). Pedagogy is seen as "an ambiguous space, not of one-between-two (theory and practice) but as one-between-three (actions, theories and beliefs) in an interactive, constantly renewed triangulation" (Johansson and Einarsdottir, 2018, p.xi). Therefore, pedagogy in this definition is based on praxis, which means pedagogical actions and decisions based on theory underpinned by values. This view of pedagogy also embraces the analysis of practices using several perspectives such as philosophy, history, anthropology, psychology and sociology. Research carried out by Cameron (2006), who examined different definitions of pedagogy in five countries, found that English pedagogy is largely used to refer to the science of education and learning. As Edwards (2000, in Cameron, 2006, p.9) notes, "It is about teachers being able to make informed interpretations of learners' knowledge and environments in order to manipulate environments which helps learners make sense of the knowledge available to them." Similarly, 'The Effective Pre-School and Primary Education Project' (EPPE) (Blatchford *et al.* 2002, p.28), (which investigated 141 pre-schools across England) identified a definition of pedagogy as "the full set of instructional techniques and strategies that enabled learning to take place in early childhood that provided opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions". This definition of pedagogy was based on the work of Gage

(1985, in Blatchford *et al.,* 2002, p.28), who argued for a "scientific basis for the art of teaching". Gage (1985) proposed that teachers need to distinguish between knowledge that is general (nomothetic knowledge) and knowledge that applies to particular events or individuals (ideographic knowledge). He argued that "teachers creatively apply their nomothetic knowledge to the ideographic problems posed by the unique group of children they teach, with all of their specific needs, socio-cultural status and cognitive and affective demands" (Gage, 1985, in Blatchford *et al.,* 2002, p.28). This definition suggests that pedagogy includes the interactive process between teacher and learner and the learning environment and the way the curriculum is interpreted and implemented. Eaude (2011), however, challenges definitions of pedagogy that view a teacher as transmitting knowledge and skills to children, preferring instead an emphasis on reciprocity. He believes pedagogy should involve children as active agents in the teaching and learning process. Eaude (2011) also believes that such definitions focus too narrowly on cognition and not sufficiently on the social and emotional influences and the wider environment in which children belong. Thus Eaude (2011) suggests that any definition of pedagogy needs to take into account individual children's needs, the group and the class as well as the setting and the community in which they are situated. Eaude (2011, p.11) believes that pedagogy for young children must take account of:

- Children's differing backgrounds and prior experience
- The varied and complex ways in which children learn
- The multiple, sometimes conflicting aims of education

- Assumptions made about children and learning

Therefore Eaude (2011) is critical of views of pedagogy that do not take into account a child's social and cultural context. According to Stewart (British Early Childhood Education Research Association (BECERA), 2021, p.3), "Pedagogy is the understanding of how children learn and develop, and the practices through which we can enhance that process. It is rooted in values and beliefs about what we want for children, and supported by knowledge, theory and experience." This is also underpinned by the belief that this incorporates all the interactions practitioners have, including with children and their families. This is the definition used for the new 'Birth to Five Matters' in England (Early Years Coalition, March 2021) as previously mentioned on page 66. The 'Birth to Five Matters' guidance also talks about the importance of practitioners having values and a professional pedagogy; this should include asking the question, 'What do I want for children?' as well as a knowledge and understanding of child development and engagement in reflective practices (Stewart, BECERA, 2021). This therefore takes into consideration a view of children in the context of their families and also the importance of knowledgeable and skilled practitioners.

Cameron and Moss (2011, p.10) offer another perspective and refer to 'social pedagogy.' They argue that there is not one recognised definition of this, "which can cause some confusion when seeking to understand its place in different countries." A further confusion as to why this term is misunderstood is because 'social pedagogy' is always a political practice and

will be interpreted differently depending on the context. For example, 'social pedagogy' is found in "most countries of Continental Europe, from Russia to Portugal and from Slovenia to Norway" and these will all have different political drives and expected outcomes (Cameron and Moss, 2011, p.10). Therefore 'social pedagogy' is broad and can vary in scope and interpretation. However, according to Cameron and Moss (2011), there are some shared understandings across countries in that it refers to education in its broadest sense, taking an holistic view and a consideration of children's everyday lives. Bennett (2004, in Sylva *et al.,* 2010) states that social pedagogy has been very influential in recent years and is highly prevalent in Scandinavian countries (including Sweden). The central aim of social pedagogy has been to empower children as active citizens so that they can act to change their own lives. When applied in practice, there is a focus on nurturing children's identity and self-esteem. According to Cameron and Moss (2011, p.8), "Despite its [social pedagogy] diversity, its responsiveness to wider context, and its broad scope, we can identify some more specific, common components that can give some coherence to social pedagogy's identity." Cameron and Moss (2011, p.9) suggest some shared 'social pedagogic' principles, which in summary include: a focus on the whole child; a dialogic relationship between practitioner and child; a critically reflective stance on practice; an emphasis on team work, with the setting and community helping to shape and influence children's development; and an emphasis on the importance of viewing children's lives as a useful resource and valuing the rights of the child.

It could be argued that 'social pedagogy' is more prevalent in Sweden than in England, as in Sweden 'social pedagogy' is a degree level qualification and pre-school settings have a 'pedagogista' working alongside teachers in early years settings. This is supported by Moss and Petrie (2002, p.38) who considered the training of teachers in Sweden and how they are trained as pedagogues, required to think about relationships, working with others, and their pedagogical approaches when working with children. Moss and Petrie (2002, p.144) assert that pedagogy is taught in Sweden from the perspective that:

> Together adults and children learn about and 'co-construct' what it is to be a human being living in society … pedagogy encompasses learning about the world, through the activities of daily life, as a social being in the company of others, discovering and exploring.

Cameron and Moss (2011, p.14) argue that "social pedagogy struggles to make itself visible and understood in the UK and the rest of the Anglophone worlds because its language and sensibility are foreign." However, influences of pioneers such as Robert Owen (1771-1858) and Thomas Barnardo (1845-1905) in the UK have their thinking rooted in elements of social pedagogy such as taking care of vulnerable children and finding solutions to social problems (Cameron and Moss, 2011). Thus I also believe that pedagogical practices and understanding of pedagogy in England does take account of 'social pedagogy' in the sense that early years settings are aware of the needs of looking at children's development holistically as well as viewing children in the context of their families and communities. This has been a key policy focus in England in terms of raising the profile and

qualifications of the early years workforce, and in a number of projects and intervention strategies (for example, in terms of improving children's speech and communication through dialogic relationship-building between parents, children and practitioners). I feel where this becomes a 'sticking point' is in reception classes in England when children are aged four to five years old. This is linked to teachers having to look at children's development from the lens of end-of-year testing and readiness for the National Curriculum when children are aged five to six in England. This is echoed by Sylva *et al.* (2010, p.149) who state that "in the early childhood field over the past two decades the terms 'curriculum' and 'pedagogy' have been used interchangeably"; this may have led some teachers and indeed writers to present "false dichotomies between 'schoolification' and 'socio-pedagogy'" (Sylva et al.,2010, p.149). Moss and Petrie (2002) claim that in England, rather than using pedagogy as an overarching concept that would represent the whole spectrum of children's provision, it is sectionalised in children's policy into labels such as social work, play and education. Therefore, in England, the use of the term pedagogy is arguably disparate, with a wide variety of pre-school settings approaching the way that they implement curricula differently. With this in mind, it is essential to look more fully into the range of pedagogical approaches applied in the teaching of children in pre-school settings.

4.3 Pedagogical Approaches to the Curriculum

One of the key factors in determining outcomes for pre-school children, as detailed in many reports such as OECD (2017) and Sylva *et al.* (2010), is the

effect of the teacher on the nature and quality of education. As expressed by Anning, Cullen and Fleer (2009, p.147), “In examining quality provision in the early years, the role of the teacher should be viewed as central to any critique. As such, the pedagogy adopted by the teacher should be considered closely.” Siraj-Blatchford (2003) draws on four longitudinal studies to argue that effective pedagogical approaches to the curriculum include the child as an active participant through adult-child involvement, cognitive co-construction, engagement, and the use of instruction techniques such as modelling and demonstrating, explanation and questioning. For example, ‘The Ypsilanti Preschool Curriculum Demonstration Project’ from the USA has frequently been used to argue the case that those children who experience a play-based curriculum (Weikart *et al.,* 1978) develop a more independent self-managing outlook. The Highscope programme claims to focus particular attention on ‘active learning’ and ‘independence’ by encouraging children to reflect verbally on their experiences, feelings and activities, including an emphasis on planning and reviewing activities (Schweinhart, 2000). This is also echoed in the OECD report ‘Starting Strong (III)’ (2012, p.5) which explored quality indicators in early childhood education and care in ten countries:

> What matters on the ground is the ability of the staff to create a high-quality pedagogic environment that makes the difference for children; that is, the critical element is the way in which staff involve children, stimulate interactions with and between children and use diverse scaffolding strategies. More specialised education and training of staff is found to be strongly associated with stable, sensitive and stimulating interactions in ECEC settings.

Therefore, what this suggests is that no one country has 'an approach' to the early years curriculum. Mulrose and Kragh-Muller (2017, p.4) concur, stating that "increasing internationalisation is fuelling interest in studying and discussing the many different traditions worldwide for establishing and operating child care centres." In particular there has been a focus on the underpinning philosophies, everyday practices, and the developmental learning and conditions that will optimise ECE quality (Mulrose and Kragh-Muller, 2017). Thus, it is interesting to draw upon comparative research and approaches to the curriculum in highlighting how key goals are apparent in practice. An example of this is the comparison of five different curricula approaches (the 'High Scope Approach', 'Experiential Education', 'Te Whariki', 'Reggio Emilia' and the 'Swedish curriculum') by Samuelsson, Sheridan and Williams (2006). Samuelsson *et al.,* (2006) found that all of these approaches to the curriculum place an emphasis on the active child and joyful learning. Another similarity is the role of communication and interaction as a key factor in children's learning and well-being and the importance of children's rights. There were also similarities in relation to visualising the child. For example, in Sweden (Lpfö, 2010) the child is seen as a cultural citizen, which is also the case in Te Whariki and Reggio Emilia. More specifically, in the Swedish curriculum, Lpfö (1998; 2010) states that each child should develop their ability to discover, reflect on and work out positions on different ethical dilemmas, and the teacher should develop children's ability to listen, narrate, reflect and express their own views. Thus, this research concluded that there was evidence of high quality in all of the programs and their implementation is linked to the competence and values of

the teacher. Furthermore, teachers with both theoretical and pedagogical knowledge are needed who are guided by the children's interest and questions, focussing on the here and now (Samuelsson *et al.,* 2006).

Another approach to the curriculum as introduced in Chapter One and mentioned on page 15 is 'Developmentally Appropriate Practice' (DAP). This is a child-centred approach developed in the United States of America by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2009); it values children and their 'uniqueness' in the context of a family. NAEYC (2009) published a position paper outlining three core considerations for early years practitioners as underpinning principles:

1. What is known about child development and learning;
2. What is known about each child as an individual;
3. What is known about the social and cultural contexts in which children live.

NAEYC (2009, p.8)

The aim of this approach to the early years curriculum was to provide a set of unified strands for practitioners to use. There are twelve principles of child development and learning that inform practice (NEAYC, 2009). These include valuing all areas of development as being interrelated and equal, as well as the importance of play in developing children's learning – in particular their language, cognitive and social development; they also include the notion that children develop when they have the opportunity to engage in

positive and nurturing relationships with adults and peers (NAEYC, 2009). There is also a focus on the role of the adult within DAP in creating a learning and caring community with children and their families through a balance of child and adult-guided experiences (NAEYC, 2009). The principles acknowledge that when looking at pre-school children, developmentally and contextually appropriate practice is best. Similarly, a cross-cultural study of pre-school children in 10 countries carried out by Montie, Ziang and Scweinhard (2006, in Rose and Rogers, 2012a) argued that DAP is most appropriate for younger children. This was also taken on board by Blenkin and Kelly (1996) in England, who advocated that this approach should be adopted in all English pre-school settings. However, according to Alghamdi and Ernest (2019), although there has been a widespread interest in DAP, the framework has been criticised in relation to its ignoring the importance of children's social and cultural backgrounds and focussing on development as a universal goal (Delpit 1993; Jipson 1991). However, NAEYC (2009) stated that some of the criticism of DAP is based on misinterpretations of its 'position statement': "Changes to the second and third position statements have been seen by many to address major issues concerning diversity and cultural background, second-language learners, and special needs children" (NAEYC, 2009, p.8). According to Alghamdi and Ernest (2019), recent variations in cultural practices have been shown to be consistent with DAP, and researchers have explored how teachers respond to DAP when there are clear contrasts with their own beliefs and values. Rose and Rogers (2012, p.9) believe that high quality early years practice takes on board DAP and "child-centred and socially just practices". They also

use the terms “child initiated and adult initiated activities rather than child led and adult directed” to reflect the mutual and reciprocal relationships that should take place between adults and children in early years settings (Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.9).

The importance of developing relationships and valuing children’s ideas is also a key aspect of another approach to the early years curriculum: Reggio Emilia. The justification of including this in this literature review is because Reggio Emilia is highly influential in Swedish early years practice. Founded by Malaguzzi, Reggio Emilia is an approach to early childhood that was developed in a Northern Italian city and is highly regarded and acknowledged by educators and researchers worldwide (Gandini, 1993). Moss (2016) contends that many people may not have heard of this pedagogical approach as it is concerned with children aged from birth to six years. However, Reggio Emilia has become renowned as one of the most important experiences in the field of early childhood education since the touring of its exhibition around the world in 1981. Sweden was in fact the first stop on this tour entitled ‘The Hundred Languages of Children’ and, according to Moss (2016), since this visit to Stockholm in Sweden, which attracted tens of thousands of visitors, a close relationship has developed between Reggio and Swedish early years educators that has lasted until the present day.

The Reggio Emilia philosophy is distinguished by the presentation of an image of children as strong, rich and powerful learners (Hendrick 2004; Millikan, 2003). According to Cagliari, Castagnetti, Giudici, Rinaldi, Vecchi

and Moss (2016), when commenting on a selection of his writings and speeches, they say that Malaguzzi believed that an early years professional must start with the question 'What is our image of the child? 'Who do we think the child is?' From answering these questions, Malaguzzi argued that everything else – policy, provision, practice, structure and culture – should then follow (Moss, 2016). When exploring this in greater depth, Cagliari *et al. (*2016, p.397) define what Malaguzzi meant by an image of the child and what he termed the 'rich child':

> There are rich and poor children. We (in Reggio Emilia) say all children are rich, there are no poor children. All children whatever their culture, whatever their lives are rich, better equipped, more talented, stronger and more intelligent that we can suppose.
>
> (Cagliari *et al.,* 2016, p.397)

This philosophy identifies children as active protagonists with unlimited potential who are eager to interact with and contribute to the world; 'rich' children are born with a hundred languages. This reflects the view that:

> Children can express themselves in diverse ways relating to the world and Malaguzzi emphasises that children are complex and holistic beings and are born to make meaning of their world. It also emphasises the importance of relationships and collaboration in learning that is characterised as social constructivism.
>
> (Rinaldi, 1993, p.22)

It could be suggested that this approach, which views the image of the child as 'rich' and competent, requires the role of the adult to include social intelligence, creativity and imagination, and to be able to see the learning

opportunities of the children in the pre-school setting. Malaguzzi's view of the role of the adult was that it should construct pedagogy for individual children based on relations, listening and liberation. This pedagogy is also about children and adults working together to construct knowledge (values and identities), making meaning, sharing and testing ideas in a dialogical relationship through the medium of open-ended project work. Cagliari *et al.* (2016, p.210) state that "the teacher should be understood as a co-constructor of knowledge but also as a researcher, experimenter and a new type intellectual, a producer of knowledge connected with the demands of society." Thus, schools for Malaguzzi were hubs of society and were public spaces for neighbourhoods as well as parents and children.

However, it could be argued that this is in stark comparison to the current view and pedagogical approach utilised in English pre-schools. As described by Moss (2016, p.172), the English education system is one of "autonomous businesses, competing for the custom of parent consumers, distantly related to a central government that provides funding and regulation." Cagliari *et al.* (2016, p.180) go even deeper than this and state that Malaguzzi believed that:

> Schools are living centres of open and democratic culture, enriched and informed by social encounters that let them go beyond their ambiguous and false autonomy and centuries-old detachment and which let them abandon the prejudice of ideological imprinting and authoritarian indoctrination.

Looking at this further, for Malaguzzi, democracy was not just about social management but also about participatory accountability and democracy. These understandings and values indeed lead to a distinct pedagogical practice. According to Moss (2016), Malaguzzi was quite clear about what pedagogy he did not want, which he called 'prophetic pedagogy'. "This approach to pedagogy was predetermined inputs and outputs and has stages of development and learning goals" (Moss, 2016, p.173). The current baseline assessment in England and the scoring and testing of children would have been a "'ridiculous simplification' of 'rich children' in the eyes of Malaguzzi" (Moss, 2016, p.173). It could be argued that there has been a shift in focus in early years in England (as previously stated). The EYFS (DfE, 2017, p.9) states that "children are unique and that the role of teachers must be to consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and [they] must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning." It could be argued that this links to the underpinning values and philosophy of Malaguzzi; however in England, a 'top down' pedagogical approach prevails (as previously mentioned) where practitioners in the early years are forced to get children ready for the next stage of development. Malaguzzi believed that the delivery of services and strong organisation in early years was vital but should be at the service of values. Malaguzzi provided a list of conditions which were ingredients to support good pedagogical work (Moss, 2016, p174). These included the following:

1. A support team of 'pedagogistas'

2. The provision of ‘ateliers’ and ‘atelieristas’ (art workshops)
3. Valuing all environments, indoor and outdoor
4. Ensuring priority access for children with special needs
5. Promoting the participation not only of parents but of all citizens in their local schools.

Broadhead, Howard and Wood (2010) develop the idea of using a mix of different pedagogical approaches and argue that contemporary policy frameworks in England focus on what play does for children. They refer to the ‘outside in’ perspective which can be linked to the transmission/directive approach. This is where education is seen as a process of enculturation. “The dominant cultural values, beliefs and aspirations of society determine what education is, what education is good for and how education should be carried out” (Broadhead, Howard and Wood (2010, p.13). The role of pre-school teachers, therefore, is to transmit the knowledge, skills and understanding that are deemed valuable to children. In comparison, Broadhead, Howard and Wood (2010) refer to the emergent/responsive approach where the focus is on practitioners responding to children’s choices and emerging knowledge through their skills and interests; the ‘inside out’ perspective derives from socio-cultural practices. What Broadhead, Howard and Wood (2010) argue is that integrated pedagogical approaches combine two pedagogical zones – adult directed and child-initiated activities – where practitioners move from one zone to another in order to respond to children’s interests and activities.

Thus, when drawing together the pedagogical approaches discussed within this chapter, what is prevalent throughout is the importance of the active agency of the child. This is referred to as child-centred approaches to the curriculum where children shape their own learning experiences through a play-based environment (Rose and Rogers, 2012). However when referring to the role of the adult there is a discrepancy in terms of the 'degree of freedom' children have and how early years practitioners 'facilitate' this and when they should intervene in children's learning and play (Rose and Rogers, 2012). What this demonstrates again is how highly skilled early years practitioners need to be to know when and how to intervene in young children's learning. The next part of the chapter will look more specifically at the role of the adult as well as influential theorists such as Vygotsky, Piaget, Bruner and Dewey.

4.4 The Role of the Adult

Indeed, one of the key variables in determining outcomes for young children, which has been established throughout this literature review through a plethora of reports and research, is the impact of the teacher on the nature and quality of early years education. Bertram and Pascal (2002, p.37), in their comparative review of early childhood curricula, concluded that "the effectiveness of the early years curriculum is dependent on the characteristics of the staff delivering it." Furthermore, research carried out by Sylva *et al.* (2007) in relation to Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY), which was a continuation of EPPE, concluded that higher quality settings engaged the children in more sustained shared thinking and

in social conversations. This has been examined further by Siraj Blatchford (2007); she refers to the concept of sustained shared thinking which is defined as “an effective pedagogical interaction, where two or more individuals ‘work together’ in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate activities, or extend a narrative” (Siraj Blatchford, 2007, p.11). Siraj Blatchford (2007) breaks down the concept of sustained shared thinking under the following headings:

1. Teacher initiating activity
2. Teacher extending activities
3. The provisions of differentiation and formative assessment
4. Attention to the relationships between children.

REPEY (Sylva *et al.,* 2010) also found that higher quality early years settings used more direct teaching which included modelling, questioning and demonstrating. In comparison, lower quality settings spent more time carrying out physical care rather than “explaining or questioning, or extending and scaffolding children’s learning” (Sylva et al., 2007 p.62). Subsequently, children in higher quality care spent more time in adult led activities and in activities involving numeracy, literacy, writing and listening. What this suggests is that if teachers take a more active role through their pedagogical practices in scaffolding, modelling and questioning children and listening to their ideas, children will receive more cognitively challenging learning experiences, as teachers will have the ability to gain insight into children’s theorising.

A point of reflection here again is the balance that practitioners provide between child initiated and teacher initiated activities. Importantly, linking to the REPEY findings is the idea of listening to children's ideas and facilitating children's learning. This is particularly challenging for practitioners in early years settings. Wood (2007, in Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.71) draws attention to the fact that "showing an interest in a range of topics or activities is not the same as making meaningful connections in which learners acquire, test, refine and reflect on their knowledge and skills." What this suggests is that children will have multiple interests and ideas, and practitioners need to pursue those which will ensure children can make meaning, through experimenting and reflecting and pursuing their ideas. Linking to this are the views of Piaget (1977) who is seen as instrumental in institutionalising the principle that children construct their own meanings from experiences within education practice (MacNaughton, 2003). According to Piaget (1977), this construction of knowledge takes place through a process of assimilation and accommodation rather than simply receiving, unfiltered, the knowledge that is transmitted to children through their experiences and by society. Wood (1998) explains how, in Piagetian theory, objects are embedded in the context of actions that serve to assimilate them to the fulfilment of intentions. "So, for example, a bottle may be known and perceived in terms of activities like grasping, bringing it to the mouth, sucking and swallowing, to the extent that any new 'container' can be assimilated successfully to these schemes in order to fulfil the desire to drink" (Wood, 1998, p 53). Thus, accommodation is the extent to which the schemes of organisation become adapted to the

new experience, thus forming knowledge new to the individual. Piaget's own descriptions of progressive equilibration suggest schemes in the child's mind being pushed gradually closer to a more 'correct' conception of the experience by disturbances to the existing equilibrium of the child (Piaget, 1977; Needham, 2008). For Piaget, the role of the adult focusses on the process of learning, rather than its end product. Teachers will evaluate the level of the child's development and ensure children's learning experiences and resources are a match to them. This insinuates a 'readiness approach' for children's stage of development and next steps based on maturational theory. Therefore the role of the adult is to intervene and offer support once children have reached that particular age and stage of development.

Alternatively, Vygotsky's view of the role of the adult focuses on learning in a social context, where children learn by interacting with others and through the cultural tools of their environment; language plays a key role in mediating these interactions (MacNaughton, 2003). The notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1987) is a key element in the role of the adult in supporting children's learning, as proposed by Vygotsky. Vygotsky (1987) illustrates the ZPD with reference to the observation that different children of the same age will be able to achieve tasks of different complexity when tutored by the same adult: "This difference between the child's actual level of development and actual level of performance that he achieves in collaboration with others, defines the zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky 1987 p.209). Vygotsky describes the linking of the zone of proximal development with the individual's actual development, as the link

between manifestations of cultural construction in the domain created of conscious awareness. MacNaughton (2003) suggests this has close links to the term “scaffolding” as developed by Wood and Bruner (1988).

The process of scaffolding is perceived to have advantages over the direct transmission of knowledge in that it affirms responsibility for learning to be with the individual rather than the ‘teacher’. Thus, it offers greater sense of ownership of knowledge and suggests to the learner that the creation of knowledge is an ongoing active process (Wood, 1998). Wood (1998), who worked with Bruner (1988) to develop research on tutoring children in problem solving tasks, identifies a tighter description of ‘scaffolding’. The term scaffolding relates to helping the child to solve problems by drawing attention to significant aspects of the problem:

> *How* can the competent adult ‘lend’ consciousness to a child who does not ‘have’ his own? What is it that makes possible this implanting of vicarious consciousness in the child by his adult tutor? It is as if there was a kind of scaffolding erected for the learner by the tutor. But how?
>
> (Bruner, 1998, p.74)

Therefore it could be argued that scaffolding and sustained shared thinking practices require a high level of skill and knowledge. Hedges and Cooper (2018, p.370) agree and state that “one of the challenges faced by efforts to gain professional status for teachers is that teaching is complex work that looks deceptively simple.” Concurrently, Rose and Rogers (2012, p.1) agree that there are many different ways in which adults interact in early years settings; they refer to the ‘plural practitioner’ and identify seven distinctive

features of the adult's role in early years settings: "This acknowledges that the role of the adult in early years settings is complex and demands many responsibilities, fulfilment of tasks, and being many different 'selves'." The seven areas consist of the critical reflector, the carer, the communicator, the facilitator, the observer, the assessor and the creator. The seven selves that make up the plural practitioner are integrated and interactive, seen as a holistic 'whole', with each contributing to the other. Rose and Rogers (2012) argue that the 'plural practitioner' is underpinned by practitioners implementing child-centred and 'socially just' practices. "Socially just practices are about creating just provision for children. Different interpretations exist about what socially just practices should look like, but the most common view is that they relate to the establishment of human rights and equality" (Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.1). Knowles (2009, in Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.4) describes social justice as "the principle by which everyone in society should have the opportunity to maximize their life chances, achieve well-being and flourish." It is about creating a learning environment where all children feel included and valued and "are treated with dignity regardless of their abilities, ethnicity, social class or gender" (Knowles, 2009, in Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.4). The underpinning principle of socially just practice is based on child-centred practices, like those identified in DAP. This approach to the curriculum empowers children to think creatively. As previously mentioned it enables them to have a voice in their own learning and demonstrates the multiple roles that adults can have when working with young children.

According to MacNaughton and Williams (2004, in Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.69), "'facilitating' in educational contexts means 'making children's learning easier' which includes organising and planning the learning environment." Dewey (1938) is thought to be one of the founders in relation to adults 'facilitating' children's learning, stating that the role of the adult is:

> That they should not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of the actual experience by environing conditions but that they also recognise in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth. Above all, they should know how to utilise the surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute to building up experiences that are worthwhile.
>
> (Dewey, 1938, p.69)

Furthermore Rose and Rogers (2012, p.73) have adapted the thinking of Rogers (1967) to illustrate "core conditions for facilitating in early years practice: realness of the facilitator of learning or being yourself, prizing, acceptance, trust and empathetic understanding." This links to the idea of relational pedagogy which is underpinned by a socio-cultural perspective and in particular the thinking of Vygotsky in relation to the ZPD and adults extending children's thinking. A key premise of relational pedagogy is that adults gain in-depth knowledge of children and their families as well as "socio-cultural theories of children's development underpinned by responsive pedagogy built on principles specified in contemporary early childhood curricula" (Wood and Hedges, 2018, p.372). Thus, communication is at the centre of relational pedagogy; there is an emphasis on "reciprocal

relationships and the involvement of families and communities in assessment and pedagogy" (Wood and Hedges, 2018, p.372). Hedges and Cooper (2018, p.372) argue for "the necessity to theorise more complex understandings of blended teaching, learning and play."

In relation to the Swedish and English early years context, it has already been considered that the Swedish curriculum is underpinned by the role of the adult as facilitator, listening to children as well as observing their ideas and taking these forward through a project-based approach. However, the new Swedish pre-school curriculum (Lpfö, 2018) does refer to a shift in the role of the adult in terms of the word 'teaching' and 'challenging children', with more of a focus on academic outcomes. The Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2017) in England arguably promotes a balance of a child-centred and adult-initiated approach, with a mix of pedagogical practices to be utilised. Therefore a key element for early years practitioners in England and Sweden is the importance of maintaining a child-centred and developmentally appropriate approach while adapting practices to meet the needs of individual and groups of children.

4.5 Conclusion to the Chapter

This chapter has investigated different meanings of the word 'pedagogy' and explored different pedagogical approaches to the curriculum. The literature suggests that early years practitioners need to adopt a combination of pedagogical approaches to the curriculum, and this includes consideration of the role of the adult. Thus, the role of the adult has also been explored, as

have the different roles which adults can take in early years settings, including engaging in scaffolding and shared sustained thinking teaching strategies, particularly through a play-based learning environment and socially just practices. The use of the terms child centred and adult centred have been used to demonstrate the dialogic and mutual relationships that should co-exist between adults and children in early years settings.

4.6 Conclusion to the Literature Review

From conducting the literature review it has been found that teachers having values underpinning their practice is imperative for young children to learn, grow and flourish. This literature review has additionally revealed the importance of values being at the forefront of early years teachers' practice, and that values are personalised and 'situated' in the settings in which practitioners work. Furthermore, practitioners need to continually critically reflect on their values and 'transform' their practice to shape and enhance the learning experiences children have in pre-school settings. It has also been found that children are competent learners from birth, and adults need to provide nurturing and stimulating learning environments through sustained and mutual relationships where a combination of child and adult centred practices are implemented. There is no one pedagogical approach to early years practice that is stipulated in the Swedish (Lpfö, 2010) or English pre-school curriculum (DfE, 2017), but teachers can use a range of pedagogical strategies throughout the school day in relation to how they feel children learn best. It could be argued that English pre-school contexts feel

pressured by the demands of government policy and a ‘top down’ pressure to get children ready for the next stage of their educational journey when they are aged four. In Sweden, there is also an increase in accountability to teach academic content such as literacy and maths, but as children do not start formal schooling until they are aged six this is less of an issue for Swedish practitioners currently. The adults’ role and the learning experiences provided are a contested space in early childhood; this is something that needs to reviewed and reflected upon regularly. I will now move on to discuss the methodological aspects of this investigation which was conducted by using the five stage criteria identified by Sharp (2011) on page 29.

Chapter Five – Methodology

5.1 Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter investigates and justifies the research methodology which is supported by a socio-cultural approach. The methodology and choice of data collection instruments which are utilised through polyvocal ethnography will also be rationalised in relation to relevant literature. This chapter also includes a discussion of the choice of participants and how trustworthiness, credibility and ethical considerations were ensured within the research process. A model of data interpretation and an overview of the limitations and constraints that were met while carrying out the research will conclude this chapter.

5.2 Context of the Research

The research involved two 'day in the life of' videos, which were recorded in two pre-schools: one in Birmingham, England and one in Gotebörg, Sweden. The settings were chosen after examining information on the settings from speaking to the pre-school teachers, having informal conversations with other practitioners in the settings, viewing the settings' policies and wall displays, the pre-schools' websites and the English nursery school's Ofsted report (2020) (no reference provided in order to preserve anonymity). They were also both selected due to their location, as each is situated on the city's northern outskirts (of Birmingham and Gotebörg) and the children who attend are from a diverse range of backgrounds and socio-economic status, according to the pre-school admissions criteria and policies.

5.2.1 The English Pre-School Context

The Birmingham pre-school offers all day and part time places for 152 two to four-year olds with 15 hours of nursery school provision. Most children attend part-time for either the first or second 'two and a half days' of the week and either attend the morning or the afternoon session. The children come from a wide variety of minority ethnic groups and a few children speak English as an additional language. Nineteen per cent of children have disabilities or special educational needs and five per cent have statements of special educational need. A majority of these children have speech and language difficulties or autism spectrum disorders. Most of the children stay at the nursery school for three terms (English schools have three terms a year: autumn, spring and summer) but a minority stay on for five terms. The English pre-school consists of one Head teacher, two qualified teachers, eight level three teaching assistants and a special educational needs co-ordinator. The children are put into smaller family groups and the pre-school has adopted a 'key worker approach'. The key worker is responsible for monitoring children's learning and development, and time is made each day for parents and key workers to share information about individual children. The English pre-school also offers before and after school care, from 8am to 5pm, by the setting's teaching assistants who are qualified as level three practitioners.

The pre-school is rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted (2020). Ofsted is a government department that inspects and regulates institutions in England

that provide education to learners of all ages and providers of care for children and young people (Ofsted 2020).

In relation to its perspective on how children learn, the English pre-school's website (2020) states that:

> The pre-school vision, in relation to young children's learning is, "that children learn best by actively pursuing their interests and ideas through play. Play allows them to explore ideas, feelings and relationships. We encourage children to become independent learners by providing them with opportunities to play, explore, investigate and follow their own interests, as well as being taught for a short time each day in their key groups.
>
> (English pre-school website 2020) (reference withheld to preserve anonymity)

The English pre-school website (2020) also talks about practitioners and children reflecting on their practice together through "co-constructing learning with children and extending their learning by providing experiences that provoke curiosity and exploration." Furthermore, the role of the adult within this is to provide a balance of adult and child-initiated activities, through a varied learning environment, planning for all areas of learning. This allows children to learn in a variety of ways (English pre-school website, 2020). This is also stipulated in the EYFS (DfE, 2017). The English pre-school website (2020) states how the practitioners regularly observe and assess children's development to plan appropriate activities. Each child has an online learning journey (tapestry) which is a record of their progress and includes observations and photographs of the child playing and learning. Parents are invited to contribute to their child's learning journey with activities

that they have been doing at home. This then helps the pre-school to gain a better understanding of children's learning and development and to plan activities to support and extend it.

In relation to the learning environment, the English pre-school website (2020) states that they value learning outdoors and that this has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and development. Children have access to the outdoors throughout the day, supporting the development of healthy and active lifestyles in offering children opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement, and promoting a sense of well-being. The setting has a Forest School Leader, who plans the focus of the forest activities, which each child takes part in once per fortnight. The setting has a dedicated Forest School area that includes children entering through a willow tunnel, with fruit trees, a fire circle, an insect home, a wormery and a wild area.

In relation to children's social and emotional development and the development of relationships, the pre-school encourages kindness and developing relationships where children and families are listened to and feel valued. The English pre-school website (2020) also says that they support children in managing feelings and behaviour through giving them the vocabulary to name a range of emotions. They use a conflict resolution approach to managing conflict, where practitioners help children learn how to find solutions to disagreements.

The English pre-school is a 'Rights Respecting School' and this means that a consideration of children's rights runs through the curriculum. There are

posters in relation to this displayed in different areas in the setting for parents, children and practitioners to see. The pre-school values state that "respecting children's rights, treating each other with dignity and valuing each person's individual identity" are threaded throughout all activities in the pre-school. They have achieved the 'Gold UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award' (it is the highest level of the Award and is granted to schools that have fully embedded the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). Finally, the English pre-school is one of several pre-schools in Birmingham who collaborate together to provide training and support for each other and other settings within the area and work collaboratively through having shared objectives.

5.2.2 The Swedish Pre-School Context

In comparison, the Swedish preschool is much smaller and has approximately 60 children, divided into four groups between the ages of 1-2 years, 2-4 years, 4-5 years and 5-6 years. Most children begin pre-school when they are one and leave when they are six; they have the same teacher throughout their pre-school experience. In the Swedish pre-school class, there are 20 children and a ratio of six children per pedagogue in comparison to the English pre-school which has a ratio of one to twelve. There are one qualified teacher and two pedagogues with college level qualifications in 'children caretaking' which is similar to the level three qualifications held by teaching assistants in the English pre-school. As in the English setting, the children come from a range of minority ethnic groups with 11 different languages spoken in the pre-school class. The Swedish pre-school is open

from 6.00am to 6.00pm and the average time for children to spend in the pre-school is eight hours per day. This depends on the working hours of the parents and the family situation. To accommodate the extra needs of families this time can sometimes be extended. This is similar to the English pre-school although the Swedish setting opens earlier and closes later. As well as a head teacher, two teachers and two teacher assistants, there is also a 'pedagogista' whose role is to cooperate with teachers and head teacher/pre-school leaders (also children and families) to improve the democratic education of children (and themselves). Although in Sweden there is not an organisation which is comparable to Ofsted in England, according to the pedagogista, every head teacher has to report on children's progress; this is to demonstrate how they are improving the quality of the setting. The reports are entered into an internal digital system which reports to Göteborg Stad, the local municipality responsible for the pre-schools in their district. If there is a complaint or an issue with the quality of the pre-schools, on rare occasions pre-schools do get visits from the school inspectorate in Sweden. According to Sweden.se (2020), although pre-schools in Sweden do not have inspections like those in English pre-schools, the role of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate is also to monitor and scrutinize the work of the pre-school. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate provides advice and guidance as to what a school needs to do to improve on the basis of the requirements of legislation.

In terms of how children learn from the perspective of the Swedish setting, they advocate that children explore and learn together with other children

and adults and in environments and contexts where they are challenged and their abilities are tested. The Swedish pre-school website (2020) (reference withheld to preserve anonymity) also states that this is supported by “pedagogical documentation, which is a way of following children's learning and the processes that are underway, including photo, film, observations and reflections together with children, parents and colleagues.” Thus, the adult’s role is to act as a model; the pre-school values children’s learning which starts from the group-learning of teachers in collaborating together, which in turn will improve the group-learning of children within the pre-school. The adult’s role is to promote children’s inner motivation and desire to learn, nurturing their participation and co-creation, and to value their learning holistically (Göteborg City's Business Concept for Pre-School and School, 2020).

The Swedish environment includes a variety of materials which allow the children the opportunity to play, explore and learn. The pre-school has open space learning environments where children can develop relationships between children of different ages (Swedish pre-school website, 2020). A project approach is adopted through the indoor or outdoor environment. Additionally, the practitioners use the local environment and the forest as a learning environment; the children access the outdoor environment for at least two hours every day. Finally, like the English pre-school, another key value of the Swedish pre-school is valuing children’s rights. According to Goteborg.se (2020), as a district (Norra Hisingen) they work with all the pre-schools to be a place for democracy and participation. Therefore, “everyone

should be given the opportunity to participate and contribute to the preschool's development. Everyone has the right to express their opinion and dare to say what they think and feel as an important asset and resource in preschool." The Swedish pre-school website (2020) acknowledges links with Reggio Emilia in Northern Italy and engages in educational exchanges.

5.3 Positionality

When undertaking research, it is imperative that the researcher considers their ontology:

> [O]ntology relates to how we see the world and our place within it. We may see it as fixed and clear, with social structures to which we all belong in our society, or we may see it as very fluid and something that is different for each of us, existing as separate individuals.
>
> (Burton and Bartlett, 2009, p.17)

Interlinked with this is our epistemology, which leads us to consider suitable methods and our understandings of the whole research process (Burton and Bartlett, 2009, p.17). When drawing this together, according to Robson (2016), a basic epistemological issue is whether or not a natural scientific approach is suitable for studying the social world. How we believe the world exists (our ontology) will be closely linked to how we see knowledge being created and suitable means of understanding it (our epistemology). This suggests that it is fundamental for researchers to consider their 'position' when carrying out research, and why they have chosen to approach it in a certain way. Moreover, as research is carried out by people, it is inevitable

that the standpoint of the researcher is a fundamental platform on which enquiry is developed: “Social research is saturated (however disguised) with positionality” (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012, p.10). To begin with, this research acknowledges that a person’s experience is central to their positionality and vice versa. It is also incumbent on the researcher to consider how perhaps another researcher’s social positionality may affect the way their data is collected and analysed (Orlowski, 2011, p.45). Like England (1994) and Merriam (2001), Rose (1997, p.52) highlights the importance of researchers taking into account their own position in relation to the research participants and research settings; they look in particular at how “the reconstructing of insider/outsider status in terms of one’s positionality in respect of education, class, race, gender, culture and other factors, offer us better tools for understanding the dynamics of researching within and across one’s culture.” Therefore, positionality allows for a narrative placement for researcher objectivity and subjectivity whereby the researcher is situated within the many aspects of perspective and positionality (Lave and Wenger, 1991). When reflecting on this from a personal perspective, my early life experiences inspired me to be well motivated and hardworking and to always challenge myself and reach my potential. Alongside this I had a willingness to want to make a difference to the lives of children and their families. This led me to pursue a degree in Early Childhood Studies and I was part of the first cohort in England to gain a degree in this area. Interestingly, after gaining first class honours, I was rejected by several universities across England on applying to take a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in primary education. This was due to a lack of understanding regarding the

worth of such degrees in comparison to degrees linked to more 'formal curriculum' subjects. This gave me an internal drive to gain a PGCE place and to put the value of Early Childhood Studies degrees 'on the map'. I gained a PGCE place the following year and decided to teach in the early years and key stage one with children aged three to seven in England. After being placed on several local authorities' newly qualified teacher 'pools', I chose a school situated in a community of severe disadvantage. It was recognised as being in the bottom 2% of schools with children from a low socio-economic background in the West Midlands in England. I relished the challenge and it resonated with my childhood idea of wanting to make a difference to the lives of children and their families.

After seven years of teaching, however, something happened. I suddenly started to question my practice. Why was I planning in this way? Why was the learning environment with four-year-old children set up like a formal classroom? I therefore challenged myself and my values and decided that the school, local authority and government agenda was not going in the direction which I deemed to be appropriate practice. I wanted to celebrate children's uniqueness, their individual needs and the needs of their families whom I had become very fond of. I gained respect from a predominantly Urdu speaking Pakistani community. Some of the children came into school without being able to play and without the ability to form sustained relationships and attachments, and were certainly not in a position to undertake an EYFS profile assessment (DfE, 2019). Some of the children had fled war-torn countries and were also seeking asylum. I therefore

decided that I could no longer teach ‘to the test’ and adopt a ‘readiness approach’ with such vulnerable children. I decided to take up a position as a senior lecturer teaching Early Childhood Studies where I could tell hundreds of students my journey and my story. I would aim to encourage them to have a strong set of values and beliefs and to have a passion to make a difference to the lives of children and their families in practice. This led me to the focus of this thesis, situated within a socio-cultural framework and approach, which advocates that teachers should have a strong set of values and a willingness to engage in deep and meaningful reflection on their practice. I also feel a strong desire to ensure that teachers engage in transformational and reflexive practice to benefit the lives of the children they work with. Berger (2015, p.221) defines reflexivity as a “continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of the researcher’s positionality as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this may affect the research process and outcome.” Thus, these positions of the researcher may impact the research in three major ways:

1. The respondent may be more willing to share their experiences with a researcher whom they perceive as sympathetic to their situation
2. [They] shape the nature of ‘researcher - researched’ relationship which in turn affects the information that participants are willing to share
3. The worldview and background of the researcher affects the way in which they construct the world, use language, pose questions and choose the lens for filtering the information gathered from participants and mak[e] meaning of it.

(Berger, 2015, p.221)

Therefore, I anticipated that by being open and honest regarding my values with the two participants in this study, and by sharing my qualifications and early years experiences, they would be more willing to share their beliefs and practice with children aged three to four. I am, however, aware of the need to acknowledge the rights of others to hold values, attitudes and opinions that differ from my own. I aimed to ensure that the power relationships between the participants and me enabled them to be involved as far as possible, and to actively have a voice in the research process. I also sought to make sure that participants were treated equitably and appropriately for the research process (EECERA ethical code, 2014, p.2) reflecting my values and ontological and epistemological stance.

5.4 Interpretivist Approach

This inquiry adopted an interpretive approach as I sought to understand and portray participants' perceptions and understandings of a particular situation or event (Burton and Bartlett, 2009). This again reflects my ontological position in terms of wanting to hear the 'stories' of two teachers and their justifications for their practice linked to their values. Thus, the interpretive approach also involves the researcher engaging in interaction that is ongoing, and there is a continuing chain of events which gives an insight into how people live with the research (Burton and Bartlett, 2009). Linked to this, Denscombe (2017) acknowledges that this paradigm embraces many social perspectives, such as phenomenology and symbolic interactionism, which will be contextualised when looking at the methodological approaches in the

next section of this chapter. Adoption of the interpretivist approach is further justified in that it sits very tightly with the four research questions (as identified on page 22) in terms of the idea of teachers' values being socially and culturally situated. However, by interpreting and responding to their practice these values may shift and therefore are not fixed. As defined by Burton and Bartlett (2009, p.21):

> Interpretivism does not see society as having a fixed structure, hidden or otherwise, because the social world is created by the interactions of individuals. Norms and values exist but as shifting organic elements of social life. They are used and changed by people as they interpret and respond to events. There are external pressures upon individuals but they do not act as some sort of external system controlling people.

In exploring this further, according to Hammersley (2012), actions must be seen as meaningful at the level of interaction. What is suggested by this is that the interpretivist paradigm seeks to understand the meanings behind these actions. This further aligns the interpretivist approach with this investigation, as not only does this research aim to investigate teachers' values on an individual level, but it also aims to explore how these values have been shaped and influenced, revealing the meaning behind their actions that underpins their practice. The researcher aims to 'understand' these actions (Burton and Bartlett, 2009). "The research participants are also viewed as helping to construct the 'reality' with the researchers" (Robson, 2016 p.27). Furthermore, as Andrade (2009, p43) highlights, "Interpretive research assumes that reality is socially constructed and the researcher becomes the vehicle by which this reality is revealed." This is closely aligned to the polyvocal ethnographic approach (which will be

considered in greater depth on page 165) which is underpinned by the notion that the researcher is the 'vehicle' by which to ascertain the two teachers' practice in 'reality'. This will allow for 'shared meanings', and offer additional insights into their teaching practices. In drawing this together, linking to my epistemology, Conole and Oliver (2007, p.24) comment:

> One useful way of classifying epistemologies is to separate those that posit knowledge as being 'out there', as something to be sought and grasped by the knower, from those that posit knowledge as being 'in here', constructed by the knower and inseparably a part of them.

Stake (2010, p.51) says, "Qualitative researchers expect to devote much of their interpretation to context and situation. It is part of their sense of how things work." Raising questions about contexts is also helpful in increasing my own professional understanding. This is particularly important and relevant for this research as Sweden is a country of which I have limited knowledge and experience. It was important that I gained an understanding of the Swedish pre-school context and Swedish culture so I could make sense of how the pre-school works and the underpinning ethos behind teachers' practice. However, although I had knowledge and experience of English pre-school contexts, I had been situated away from practice for several years and I would need to engage with and seek to equally understand how the English pre-school setting and English teacher are contextually situated.

The design of this research is based on the belief that educational research is contextualised and created in educational practice (Silverman, 2016). Again, this reflects my interpretivist ontology and therefore necessitates a constructivist epistemology. Woods (2006) suggests that qualitative research focuses on natural settings and is concerned with life as it is lived, things as they happen, situations as they are constructed in the day-to-day, moment-to-moment course of events. Woods (2006) stipulates that interpretivists prefer more 'naturalistic' forms of data collection, making use of individual accounts and often including detailed descriptions to give a 'feeling' for the environment. Thus methods favoured in interpretivist studies are informal interviews and observations which allow the situation to be as 'normal' as possible. These methods are often reliant upon the ability of the researcher to be reflexive in the research process. Moreover, interpretivist studies tend to be small scale (micro), aiming for detail and understanding rather than statistical representativeness (Burton and Bartlett, 2009). Such data collection methods resonate with this research. The role of the researcher is to be reflexive and responsive to the teacher's reflections.

However, adopting an interpretivist approach makes generalisations unrealistic, as realities cannot be easily understood from their contexts or fragmented into compartments for separate study (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). This is highlighted by Bassey (1999, p.44) who says that, "interpretation is a search for deep perspectives on particular events and for theoretical insights; it may offer possibilities but no certainties as to the outcome of future events." Although the research findings may not be generalised to the wider

early years sector, other teachers working in pre-school settings may be able to relate to and interpret the findings into their everyday practice in terms of reflecting on their role and the experiences that they offer to children.

5.5 Case Study

The case study approach is not a method as such, but a research strategy where the researcher aims to study one case in depth (Hammersley *et al.,* 2011). According to Yin (2014, p.13), a case study is a strategy for doing research that "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." The 'contemporary phenomenon' being investigated is the values of teachers in the 'real life' context of a pre-school. The 'multiple sources of evidence' include the different stages of the teachers' 'voices' obtained through polyvocal ethnography which includes ongoing dialogue and interviews. Hitchcock and Hughes (2003) also state that the case study approach allows the researcher to get close to the subject of interest, partly through access to factors such as thoughts, feelings, values and desires. My aim was to get close to the teachers so that that they disclosed their values and beliefs, and to engage them in deep, meaningful conversation regarding their practice. A case study allows the researcher to gain a valuable and unique insight in a way that is different from and in some cases better than what is possible using other approaches. More specifically, this research adopted an exploratory case study approach. Denscombe (2017, p.38) states that "an exploratory case study explores the key issues affecting those in the case study setting such as problems or

opportunities." Thus, an advantage of using a case study is that it can draw upon people's experiences and practices in a realistic manner and context (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010). This research provided an insight into what learning experiences are being offered to children in two different countries' pre-school settings. The research was close to teachers' experiences so that the researcher could be more accessible and persuasive in terms of enabling them to share their values in an open and dialogic manner.

Anderson and Arsenault (1998) suggest that most case study research in education is interpretive, seeking to bring a case to life. They state that often case studies occur in a natural setting with the researcher employing qualitative and/or quantitative methods and measures as befits the circumstances. As Yin (2014) notes, the forms that the data collection take essentially depend upon the nature of the particular case to be investigated. Burton and Bartlett (2009) see an advantage of case studies as being that multiple methods can be used; they argue that triangulation therefore automatically takes place, increasing the validity of the study. This will be considered in more depth later on in this chapter. In summary, as articulated by Robson (2016, p.136), "case study is a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence."

5.6 Socio-Cultural Methodological Approaches

To enable the lived realities of two pre-school teachers to be explored, it was useful to draw upon several socio-cultural methodological approaches and perspectives. This provided the opportunity to explore cultural influences, social experiences and individual perspectives. According to Creswell (2008 p.8), socio-cultural approaches are often combined with interpretivism as these are underpinned by the assumption that:

> Individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences – meanings directed towards certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the research to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meaning into a few categories or ideas. The goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participant's views of the situation being studied.

Likewise, Hedegaard and Fleer (2008, p.1) suggest that a socio-cultural approach is highly important in research. They believe that there is a need to value and be aware of the social and cultural historical practices in which children and their families live and learn, and therefore their 'social situation'. Furthermore, they argue that it is only by investigating through the lens of the teachers in a particular context, that we can understand the social situation of children's development. It is the interactions and dialogue that children and adults have that should be studied, taking into account their individual, setting and community 'social situation'.

Table 5.1 below shows an overview of the research methodology.

Table 5.1 Overview of Research Methodology

METHODOLOGY	VOICE ONE (teachers on own practice)	VOICE TWO (teachers on own practice)	VOICE THREE (teachers on each other's practice)	VOICE FOUR (teachers on whole process)
• Interpretative • Socio-Cultural • Phenomenological • Symbolic interactionalism • Polyvocal ethnography • Comparative • Ethnographic principles	1. Video a day in the life of an English and Swedish pre-school teacher. Teachers choose several video episodes (based on researcher's field notes and observations as prompts) 2. Preliminary analysis of data is generated by researcher and teacher by viewing footage together through unstructured interviews and dialogue. The video footage is then edited to twenty minutes	Teachers watch and reflect on their own twenty-minute video footage, through unstructured interviews and dialogue with researcher The teachers then provide written reflections and generate ranking of their values	Teachers watch and reflect on each other's practice through unstructured interviews and dialogue with researcher and provide written reflections	Teachers take part in a semi structured exit interview, reflect on voice 1, 2 and 3 and add any additional comment. Reflect on video stories and ranking values are amended

Thus, the idea of 'social situations' and dialogue in research also links to phenomenology which, according to Robson (2016), focuses on the

subjective experience of the individuals being studied and what their experiences are like. Husserl (1970, in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.23), who is thought to be the founder of phenomenology, states that it is "the source of the foundation of science and concerned with questioning the common sense", for example, the taken for granted assumptions of everyday life. This links to the two teachers in this study and the idea of 'bringing their values to the surface' in relation to their practice. Marton (1981, pp.180-181) elaborates on this and outlines four key aspects which feature in the distinct field of enquiry of phenomenological research which could be associated with this investigation. First is that we only have access to the world through experience. Second is the notion of 'essence', and that phenomena and aspects of reality are experienced in a number of qualitatively different ways. Third is the phenomenology of political power which is how people perceive, experience and conceptualize political power. Fourth is the pre-reflective level of consciousness and how each day is 'lived' and what is culturally learned. This also links to individual ways of relating ourselves to the world around us. These four aspects clearly relate to the focus of this research: first, through capturing the teachers' practice as it naturally occurs ('experience'); and second, in that the two teachers are situated in different cultural and societal contexts ('essence') and we can see how they implement their 'political power' through the implementation of government policy and curricula. Therefore, reflecting and gaining an insight into the policy, curricula and practice in another country will allow the teachers to have a 'pre-level of consciousness'.

My socio-cultural approach is also informed by symbolic interactionalist thinking. This has relevance to this investigation in which phenomenology focuses on the broader, societal aspects which influence behaviour, and where symbolic interactionalism focuses on the world of subjective meanings and the symbols by which the world is produced and represented. This includes not making pre-determined assumptions about, for example, teachers' values and the role that they feel they have when working with children aged three to four. Blumer (1998, p.2) states that symbolic interactionism is based on three premises. First, human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them. In relation to the focus of this research, this reflects teachers' values regarding their role when working with children aged three to four. Second, we give meaning to things based on our social interactions but the meaning we give something is not permanent. Third, this process takes place in a social context, i.e. individuals align their actions to those of others. This is a feature of this investigation, as the teachers reflect on each other's and their own practice through four multiple voices (as illustrated in Table 5.1 on page 153), and from this their values can be challenged, changed or adapted and so are not 'permanent'. Furthermore, Woods (1983, in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.20) summarises key aspects of symbolic interactionism, including:

- Individuals as constructors of their own actions;
- The various components of self and how they interact;
- The process of negotiation, by which meaning is continuously being constructed;

- The social context in which they occur and whence they derive.

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p.26), both phenomenology and symbolic interactionism “preserve the integrity of the situation ... the influence of the research in structuring, analysing and interpreting the situation is present to a much smaller degree than more traditionally orientated approaches.”

5.7 Praxeology

This research also takes a praxeological view; this links to my positionality in terms of wanting the study to ‘make a difference’ as the teachers take on board their reflections from the study, so that it becomes transformative in relation to their practice. To explain this further, praxeology operates on two levels with double objectives: “Firstly, it aims to produce knowledge and actions which are directly useful to a group of people. Secondly, it seeks to empower people to seek social transformation through a process of constructing and using their own knowledge” (Pascal and Bertram, 2012, p.479). Praxeology is a developing paradigm for early childhood researchers, developed from a passion, commitment and belief that “early childhood research should be and could be more democratic, participatory, empowering and should also be deeply ethical and political in its orientation” (Pascal and Bertram, 2012, p.479). Thus, “‘praxeology’ describes the theory and study of ‘praxis’ (defined by Freire (1970) as ‘reflection on, and in, human action’), and embeds this in a situated context in which power and ethics are fundamentally realised and explored” (Pascal and Bertram, 2012,

p.479). Therefore, praxeology advocates that researchers and participants join together in meaningful and purposeful ways:

> Reflection (phronesis) and action (praxis) done in conjunction with others, needs to be immersed within a more astute awareness about power (politics) and a sharpened focus on values (ethics) in all of our thinking and actions. Realising these intentions requires practising praxeologists to engage in deep reflexivity and to adopt rigorous methodological processes.
>
> (Pascal and Bertram, 2012, p.479)

Linking praxeology, phenomenology and symbolic interactionism together, praxeology also acknowledges 'phronesis' (the wisdom of experience), and therefore respects and acknowledges two teachers' experiences, knowledge, training and values. Praxeology is linked to methods of data collection such as interviewing and observation as well as informal conversations, videoing and field notes which reflect the methods of data collection chosen for this study (Pascal and Bertram, 2012).

5.8 Ethnography

Although this study does not claim to be ethnographic, it is argued that it is based upon ethnographic principles and is therefore ethnographic in nature. Hammersley (2012) identifies that ethnography is a variable and responsive approach that is accepting of different emphases and nuances. This allows a researcher to assign different distinctions to ways of knowing, under the umbrella of ethnography. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue that some ethnography is concerned with researcher self-reflexivity and interaction with participants which mediates the findings; while for others it places emphasis

on relatively minimal input from research informants when interpreting the data. This suggests that adopting ethnographic research offers different and often disputed approaches, as Hammersley and Atkinson (2019, p.1) comment, “Its variable and sometimes contested character must be remembered” and “it does not capture all of its meanings in all contexts” (p.2). As Brewer (2000) also identifies, it is not the methods utilised that make research ethnographic, rather it is the philosophical underpinnings that a researcher holds that are most crucial. This can be related to a researcher assuming a holistic outlook to gain a comprehensive picture of a social group (Fetterman, 1998) and to gain an insight into teachers’ ‘perceptions of their world’ (Denscombe, 2017). Many aspects of ethnography feature in this study. For example, Denscombe (2017, p.62) asserts that “the element of comparison and contrast is an underlying facet of ethnographic research.” This is a feature of this study, which aims to compare the similarities and differences of two teachers’ values in two different countries. Similarly, Fetterman (1998, p.1) asserts that “ethnography is the art and science of describing a group or culture … the ethnographer is interested in understanding and describing a cultural scene from the emic, or insider’s perspective.” This is also an advantage of ethnography, as it is ‘anthropologically strange’ in that it allows the researcher to study the different culture or events which the researcher shares. This again resonates with the focus and positionality of this researcher in terms of previously being a pre-school teacher in an English context. I have an understanding of the pre-school environment and the curricula and policies which underpin it. It also emphasises the point that it is the teachers’ ‘voices’

which are the focus of this research and therefore this research comes from an ‘insider’s perspective’ in terms of the teachers’ ‘stories’ and ‘day in the life of’ videos chosen by them, which best reflect their practice. According to Robson (2016, p.143), the main aim and purpose of ethnographic studies is “often considered to be its production of descriptive data free from imposed external concepts and ideas”. Its goal is to produce ‘thick description’ which helps facilitate an understanding of a culture for ‘insiders and outsiders’ and is created by discerning patterns of cultural experience (Geertz, 1993, p.10). Hearing people’s repeated feelings and their stories is a key feature of ‘thick description’. This is evidenced by field notes, interviews and artefacts and, in the case of this research, a video as stimulus to capture practitioners’ real life ‘stories’ and to gain insights into their values. According to Denzin (1989), thick description does more than record what a person is doing. It goes beyond the mere fact and surface appearances. It presents details, context, emotion and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another:

> Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It inserts history into experience. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description the voices, feelings, actions and meanings of interacting individuals are heard.
>
> (Denzin, 1989, p.83)

5.9 Comparative Education

This investigation aims to compare the views and beliefs of two teachers in Sweden and England in an evaluative manner (as previously stated) and

compare the differences and similarities in relation to their role and the experiences they provide. This tallies with the thinking of Salway *et al.* (2011, p.2) who agree that "comparative research can be useful because there is a need to take social context seriously and it allows for exploration." Furthermore, comparative analyses offer the potential for new insights into how the wider socio-political context impacts upon experiences and outcomes. This again links to the focus of this study in terms of looking at two teachers' values and how these 'sit' within educational policies in their respective countries. Thus, according to Bickmore *et al.* (2017, p.3), "comparative education offers a starting point for improving our educational systems and classroom practices. It also challenges us to think more broadly about the link between local practices and global issues and to explore the overlapping values and social systems that underpin the educational enterprise itself." This again links to this investigation in relation to the two teachers having the opportunity to look at each other's practices and pre-school setting environments in England and Sweden.

It can be argued that comparative researchers generally investigate several countries on a much broader scale than in this research, and that this research is based upon some of the principles of comparative research. Also, in terms of the similarity in the implementation of educational policy since 1993, because the outcomes are arguably very different, an interest in comparing the two countries is warranted. This is supported by Salway *et al.* (2011, p.2) who say that:

> Comparative analyses can potentially highlight the competing priorities operating in different contexts, make visible taken for granted assumptions and underlying ideologies, reveal the arbitrariness of particular categorisations and concepts and suggest innovative solutions.

This again links to the focus of this study in terms of 'making visible' the two teachers' values as well as highlighting 'competing priorities' in the two pre-school settings in England and Sweden.

Furthermore, there has been much debate on comparative education and in particular the methods that are used, and it has been contested by many comparative researchers who question whether there are particular methods at all. Phillips and Schweisfurth (2014) also echo that comparativists use all the research methods that other educational researchers employ. King (1968) argues that comparativists should use the 'tools for the job' and therefore whatever method 'fits best,' which is the data collection approach adopted for this research. What this suggests is that comparativists can use a range of established approaches and must add to them, making them specific to the particular task of comparison. Moreover, Theisen and Adams (1990, in Phillips and Schweisfurth, 2014, p.306) articulate different criteria and classifications of comparative research which include analytical, descriptive, evaluative and exploratory. This research is exploratory as it aims to explore differences and similarities between the two teachers' roles, relationships, and the processes behind their practice in depth, which encompasses all aspects of exploratory comparative research.

However, finally, the cultural context of the study needs to be considered, in particular the Swedish pre-school, as this is fundamental in terms of the role of the adult and the learning experiences videoed. According to Osborne *et al.* (2003), there are four issues which need consideration when undertaking comparative research. These are: 'conceptual equivalence', 'equivalence of measurement', 'linguistic equivalence' and 'sampling'. 'Conceptual equivalence' refers to whether the concepts under study have equivalent meaning in both cultures. Osborne *et al.* (2003, p.21) state that "a major challenge for comparative research is to provide conceptual definitions that have equivalence, though not necessarily identical meaning in various cultures." They believe, however, that this is lessened to an extent when comparing two westernised industrial societies (such as England and Sweden). In order to address this issue, the word 'professional' was not used by me in this research (as stated in the introduction on page 17), as this can be interpreted differently across cultures due to levels of training and qualifications. Both teachers had been teaching for ten years, and both had completed an equivalent degree in early childhood and a teacher training course in their respective countries. The word 'pedagogy' is also a contested term and perhaps has different meaning in England and Sweden, as outlined and recognised in the literature review. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, I explained to both teachers that I was looking at their role and the learning experiences and resources that they provide for three and four year old children. The same three to four year age group was used in both countries, as considered in this chapter under the heading 'sampling'.

In terms of ‘equivalence of measurement’, this issue did not prove to be too difficult in this research due to the research design and use of polyvocal ethnography. This is agreed by Osborne *et al*. (2003, p.22) who say that “the most direct approach to equivalence is the joint-development model where the research design is arrived at jointly by collaborators from the different cultures involved and the study is carried out more or less simultaneously in these cultures.”

A major consideration, however, is the ‘linguistic equivalence’ and the issue of translation, as I do not speak Swedish. In terms of the actual videoing, this was not a significant issue as I was focussing on the Swedish teacher’s role and then asking for her interpretation of this afterwards. So I was focussing on the different activities and any moments or interactions of interest, and I utilised body language and her gestures as a prompt to inform my field notes and observations. I would also ask the teaching assistants to explain what was happening next, for example. On several occasions the Swedish teacher would speak English to the children, as it seemed to be a common language most of the children could engage with and understand. The Swedish teacher did speak good English, and there were over nine languages spoken by the children in the Swedish pre-school (only three of the children spoke Swedish as their first language). However, although the teacher spoke English, I cannot presume that her translation entirely matches my understanding as an English speaking researcher and teacher, and there may thus be discrepancies in meaning between English and Swedish. However, an important principle that I sought to adopt in my study

was to ensure that the research design is salient to both cultures, and that the "primary emphasis in translation is on the conceptual equivalence – comparability of ideas – rather than words per se" (Osborne *et al.*, 2003, p.22). This is congruent with the research design in this investigation as stipulated in the section 'polyvocal ethnography' on page 165. Furthermore, despite the different language contexts, the Swedish teacher's competence in English allowed her to articulate her thoughts and reflections fully and directly on the activities and interactions in which she engaged as part of her role.

5.10 Data Collection

All forms of data collection were considered as, according to Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2010, p.86), "thinking methodologically is an important but often neglected part of doing research." The methods of data collection used for the purpose of this research were interviews, field notes, an edited video from each pre-school setting, and writing and reflections which are designed to allow researchers to speak directly in the research, all of which resonate with polyvocal ethnography (Tobin, Wu and Davidson, 1989). However, although this is based on the methodological approach adopted in the work of Bertram and Pascal (2007), Tobin and Hayashi (2012) and Arnold and Brennan (2013), I have used an extended combination of data collection tools with the view to finding what 'method fits best' (Robson 2016) or what aspects of methodology 'fit best.' The methodological stages developed for this research are outlined in Table 5.2 below:

Table 5.2 Methodological Stages

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
The researcher spends an initial day in the setting, letting the children and practitioners get used to the video recorder (and the researcher), ensuring all ethical protocols have been disclosed and addressed with the practitioner, parents and setting manager, and the teacher is clear about focus of the research	Shoot the video footage. Focus on one teacher throughout the day. Researcher observes and makes field notes/prompts on footage	Using researcher's prompts, field notes and observations. Researcher and teacher watch the footage and researcher asks questions to stimulate discussion in relation to teacher's values	The researcher then edits the footage to twenty minutes. The teachers watch the video again to check if this best reflects their practice and their role.	The footage is then used as a stimulus to gain the four voices outlined in the methodology above on page 153 (Table 5.1)

5.11 Polyvocal Ethnography

Relating to the four voices outlined in Figure 5.1, it can be observed that several forms of data collection were also utilised for the purpose of this investigation. These include interviewing, field notes and participant observations, intertwined within the polyvocal ethnographic approach. Thus, the polyvocal approach will be considered first and then how interviews, observations and field notes were used to draw together the different methods.

In relation to polyvocal ethnography, according to Tobin and Mantovani (2010, in Tarozzi and Mortari, 2010, p.207), “A basic assumption of this method is that the video material is richer, better contextualized and less abstract than verbal questions as a tool to stimulate discussion. The key to the method is that the video is not the data, the data are the discourses and dialogue provoked by the films.” The video footage for this research began at the beginning of the pre-school day (day 2) and tracked a Swedish and English pre-school teacher. While I was filming, because of the use of the tripod for the video recorder, I was able to note and record ‘key moments’ and field notes based on my observations to stimulate discussion. According to Tobin and Mantovani (2010, in Tarozzi and Mortari, 2010, p.204), “The focus on characters and narrative combined with the inclusion of segments that present some ambiguity encourages informants to talk by suspending or postponing the process of viewers falling back on the habitual knowledge and conventional responses elicited by an educational film.” Tobin and Mantovani (2010, in Tarozzi and Mortari, 2010, p.205) assert that “an assumption of polyvocal ethnography is that the video material is richer, better contextualized and less abstract than verbal questions as a tool to stimulate discussion.”

Therefore, when showing the video back to the teachers on day 3, with the researcher reflecting on key moments, a mutual dialogue was elicited regarding their role and why they were engaging in the pedagogical practices that were filmed (voice one). This also links to my positionality as, coming

from an early years teaching background, I knew what type of questions and prompts to use. According to Tobin and Mantovani (2010, in Tarozzi and Mortari, 2010, p.205), “The special characteristics of the videos make the access to meanings and interpretations possible. The edited images are constructions but they become comprehensible, meaningful and real when informants watch them and discuss them.”

Furthermore, the process of shooting and then editing the video followed the same steps in each country. After editing the video down to 20 minutes, the footage was then shared with the teachers. Then another dialogue about their practice took place which included any amendments or additions which were then edited (voice 2). Therefore, the study serves as a catalyst for dialogue among early years teachers about their values regarding their own and each other’s practice. The teachers then engaged in dialogue and written reflections on their own and each other’s videos (voices two and three). As reiterated by Tobin, Wu and Davidson (1989, p.96), “In order to function effectively as provocations or stimuli, videos need to be hybrid constructions that are both scientific texts and works of art.” By discussing and interpreting images through different eyes and from different perspectives, we end up with a different sort of video than each participant would have had on their own. It is suggested that this process “accelerates our task of bringing cultural meanings to the surface and makes the videos more effective as stimuli because by the time the editing process is complete, they already contain within them a variety of contrasting interpretations” (Tobin, Wu and Davidson, 1989, p.96).

This method of data collection represents an attempt to develop a methodology that:

> Combines theoretical reflection on education with systematic data collection, coding and interpretative analysis … through the eyes and voices of insiders and outsiders. The hypothesis is that each voice is an expression not only of the thoughts and consciousness of an individual but also of thoughts and consciousness of a group and a reflection of a larger discourse.
>
> (Bakhtin, 1988, p.207)

This is echoed by Bertram and Pascal (2013, p.489) when referring to the use of video: “It is claimed that this wider range of expressive activity enriches the research and provides complexity and depth, thus allowing a richer vein of knowledge and understandings to be made visible.”

Nind, Curtin and Hall (2016) consider different research methods that are suited to the complexity of pedagogic research. They consider pedagogy “as a set of interactions: between teachers and learners, teachers and teachers, learners and learners, teachers and the curriculum and so on” (Nind, Curtin and Hall, 2016, p.173). A socio-cultural perspective is also taken; they place value on researching pedagogical interactions with teachers, learners or both where research methods can become inclusive, collaborative or dialogic. Nind *et al.* (2016) refer to methods of stimulated recall, reflection and dialogue. This is an approach that is particularly well suited to researching pedagogy, as it draws the attention of the participants to the details of the pedagogical interactions and then leads them into further less visible

elements underlying those interactions. Indeed Moyles, Adams and Musgrove (2002) used stimulated dialogue in their Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning (SPEEL). As in this study, they articulate that there is a need for teachers to surface and articulate their pedagogical values and beliefs. They believed that "video stimulated reflective dialogue enabled the researchers to extrapolate practitioners' perspectives and with this to generate in-depth understanding of effective early years pedagogy" (Moyles, Adams and Musgrove, 2002, p.470). Comparing video-stimulated reflective dialogue with ordinary interviews, the researchers found that in the latter, while expressing links between beliefs, knowledge, thinking and practice was challenging but worthwhile, the reflective dialogue resulted in different kinds of knowledge emerging in which descriptions of pedagogic principles and practices could begin to be substantiated, and highly complex pedagogy could be identified (Moyles, Adams and Musgrove, 2002). In relation to this study, in voices two and three the teachers did reflect on their own and each other's practice through written reflections, and were stimulated by watching each other's videos. According to Brookfield (2017), such critical reflection is the sustained and intentional process of identifying and checking teachers' assumptions. Additionally, I used the videos to generate discussion where the two teachers were equal partners, as Tobin and Hayashi (2012) and Arnold and Brennan (2013) did; but I also combined these two approaches together by not presuming that I already knew the teachers' values, asking them about this on day 3 of my research (see Table 5.1 on page 153). I aimed to draw comparisons in an evaluative manner rather than seeking evidence "of the cultural ways of thinking that mediate

pedagogical practices" (Arnold and Brennan, 2013, p.3). Polyvocal ethnography, according to Tobin *et al.* (1989), reflects many voices and it promotes an insider's and outsider's view through ongoing dialogue, telling and retelling the teacher's practice. The video is therefore a negotiated text that includes multiple voices, interpretations and perspectives.

5.12 The Benefits and Challenges of Videoing as a Data Collection Tool

The benefits and challenges of using video were briefly considered in the previous section, 'polyvocal ethnography.' This section will explore the complexities of video as a data collection tool in more depth. To begin with the benefits of using video will be addressed and the fact that video material catches the facial expressions of people where audio recordings do not – something which is especially important when undertaking case study data collection (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). It is also useful to capture interactions between people and evolving situations and 'stories' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). The video can also capture everyday routines and practices of participants; it enables the researcher and participants to revisit situations and events which may not have been possible with other methods. For example, to gain meaningful observations the researcher must make many choices in advance, some of which are irreversible; also when writing field notes the researcher has to focus for emphasis on a particular scene or event (Lambert, 2019). A video therefore allows for repeated viewing and checking – an essential element in order to allow the two teachers to review their footage and take ownership of it in relation to their values once edited down to the final twenty minute video. The

methodological stages of filming are illustrated in Table 5.2 (on page 165) and discussed under the heading ‘Interpretation of the Data’. As aptly quoted by Lambert (2019, p.64), a video is a useful tool to “observe phenomena that are too complex to be noticed by the naked eye”, which resonated with this research as the two teachers articulated their values. According to Lambert (2019), there are four main benefits of using video as a data method: multiple review, detailed analysis, simultaneous perspectives, and discussion of data. Firstly, ‘multiple review’ refers to the opportunity to scrutinise events repeatedly. This was imperative for this investigation in terms of the teachers deciding which sections of the video they wanted to leave in, and also when formulating their video stories in relation to their values and having dialogue about their practice. This involved repeatedly watching, rewinding and forwarding different parts of the footage on day 3 of the research. The teachers and I spent several hours looking at their video footage and using my field notes and observations as prompts to capture which parts of the footage they wanted to keep or discard. Due to the routine of the day in both pre-schools, the video discussions were set out in the order they occurred in the pre-school day. Also, some of the activities the teachers were engaged in went on for a period of time, so their reasoning and justification behind it linking to their values could be captured without showing the whole activity. The teachers would decide which aspect of that particular activity they wanted in the final footage, which I then edited for them based on the unstructured interview discussion. I then spent several weeks editing the videos (day 4) and sent the footage via Dropbox to both teachers to ensure they agreed that it accurately represented our

discussions and dialogues. The teachers were then given two weeks to review and reflect on the footage. I then returned to the English setting to speak to the English practitioner and arranged a SKYPE call with the Swedish teacher (Day 5 as illustrated in Table 5.2 on page 165). Subsequently, this use of video allowed for 'detailed analysis' where speech, gestures and body language can be simultaneously used compared to direct observation (Lambert, 2019). Thus the video enabled the researcher to track the movements of one adult in depth, capturing nuances and additional insights which were used as a building block when interviewing participants about their values, linking to the third benefit of videoing – 'simultaneous perspectives'. Finally, 'discussion of data' from the video footage allows for multiples perspectives, views and interpretations of the recorded material (Lambert, 2019), which is an important factor in polyvocal ethnography. Once the teachers had viewed the first edited version of the video, the English teacher suggested that we call them 'stories' to reflect their day as it progressed. The story titles were decided by both teachers. They also suggested further editing to the videos having had the opportunity to reflect on their values, and changes were made as suggested before returning the footage once more to the teachers for checking. At this stage both teachers were happy with the versions presented (voice 4).

However, as with all methods of data collection, using video comes with its challenges. For example, a video recorder on a tripod has its field and focus pre-determined (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011); there were also some hidden parts of the pre-schools where there were cabinets, bookshelves and

pillars blocking the camera filming. Therefore the position of the camera can be difficult to navigate in terms of location, height and lighting. Fortunately I took the opportunity to have some training on some of these issues. The training considered ethical and copyright issues in terms of camera positioning (to ensure, for example, clothing labels were masked out of any footage). I also took the opportunity to have some additional one-to-one training to develop my videoing. Ethical considerations are also key, and fortunately, the film director running the training allowed me to adapt and use his permission and consent forms including a risk assessment which will be covered in greater depth in the ethics section in this chapter. According to Lambert (2019), close attention needs to be paid to ethical issues such as obtaining consent, video usage and the ethical conventions which apply in the particular country and context in which recording takes place. In practical terms, videoing is also very time-consuming – filming, watching the footage several times and then editing takes a significant amount of time. This is referred to as 'magnification' where the researcher selects certain parts of the footage to use from the amount of footage obtained (Lambert, 2019). This was an issue in this research as the English setting produced six hours of footage and the Swedish video two hours. Although I spent an equal amount of time in each setting (9am-3pm), the Swedish teacher spent more time reflecting and observing the children from a distance and utilising peer and group work with the pre-school activities. In comparison, the English teacher sat with the children for more prolonged periods, moving with them from one activity to another as she followed the setting routine, engaging with the children for the whole period – and therefore more footage was

captured. However the stories generated in both settings were still arguably typical of pre-schools in England and Sweden and provided extended exemplification of their pedagogical approaches in their 'situated' cultural context.

As the researcher, I also had to be aware of my own bias in terms of what I filmed and the focus and position of the video camera. This was mitigated to some degree by the teachers' involvement in footage selection, but I also needed to be aware of my interpretation of the practice observed and filmed, and that this may be influenced by my own values and beliefs. I continuously reflected on this throughout the data collection process (as stated earlier on in this chapter when considering my positionality on page 142). By giving voice to the participants, I aimed to empower them to be confident and to share and celebrate their 'best' practice.

According to Lambert (2019), a challenge when videoing is 'reactivity' which needs to be considered in relation to the participants and the researcher. It could be argued that the 'naturalness' associated with qualitative investigations – and indeed, the behaviour of the two teachers in my study – was compromised by the presence of a video camera in the settings. Thus reactivity is the idea that "the researcher triggers changes in participants in ways that affect whatever is being investigated" (Lambert, 2019, p.68). However the adults in both settings had used video before to reflect on their practice. Lambert (2019) also reminds us that cultural norms in relation to using video have changed dramatically as the popularity of using video to

record events has become more common. Thus, the strategy I used in this research was in agreement with Heath *et al.* (2010, in Lambert, 2019, p.69) who argue that "the issue of reactivity is often exaggerated when it comes to research…the goal should perhaps not be to eliminate reactivity in qualitative research but to use it productively." In this research, I therefore spent a day familiarising myself with the participants and the setting. I developed a positive rapport with the two teachers, and as a result I was able to address any concerns about being recorded, minimising the surveillance element of videoing. Furthermore there is a consensus amongst video researchers that the camera effect in most studies decreases over time (Lambert, 2019, p.69). I felt that this happened with the participants; upon reflection they acknowledged that they had almost forgotten that the camera was there after a while. Furthermore, no data is arguably 'natural', as researcher bias and influence will feature in many forms of data collection.

5.13 Observation

According to Robson (2016, p.315), "As the actions and behaviour of people are a central aspect in virtually all real world research, a natural and obvious technique is to watch what they do, to record this in some way and then to describe it, analyse and interpret what we have observed." Thus, the major advantage of observation as a technique is its directness. Robson (2016) suggests that there are several advantages to the use of observations, especially when these are complemented by interviews. This is due to the fact that there are often differences between what participants say and their actual practice. According to Burton and Bartlett (2009, p.209), there are several strengths of observation in data collection. First, it is possible to see

how people behave in ‘natural’ situations, for example watching how a teacher interacts with children. Second, researchers can see whether the subjects in the observation act as they say they do. Thus, the teachers may tell me what their values are in relation to the experiences of pre-school children, but the observation may not reflect that. Third, an observer can gather large amounts of data in a short time, for instance, in a ‘day in the life of’ video. Fourth, observations may bring certain practices and behaviours to the attention of the researchers of which they had not previously been aware. This can be related in the sense that the two teachers may not be aware of some of their teaching practices and values. Therefore, in summary, observations are an appropriate technique for looking at real life situations.

There are different kinds of observations. These range from structured observations to participant observations; according to Robson (2016, p.319), “The basic difference is that the pure observer typically uses an observation instrument of some kind, the participant observer is the instrument.” Initially a dilemma arose in terms of whether as the researcher I was a participant observer or not. However, it became apparent after the familiarisation visits that I sought to become some kind of member of the observed group. This again links to my positionality. It can be argued that I was a participant observer, as participant observation is an approach to research that is established within the ethnographic tradition (Aubrey *et al.,* 2000). Although this research does not claim that it is ‘purely ethnographic’, it is underpinned by ethnographic principles (as previously mentioned), and participant

observation enables the researcher to observe culturally patterned specific behaviours whilst immersed in the contexts in which these are occurring.

However, after reflecting on my positionality within the research and my research design intention, I recognised that perhaps I was 'the participant as observer'. According to Robson (2016), within this observation approach, the fact that the observer is an observer from the start is made clear to the participants, but the observer tries to establish close relationships with members of the group. This again links to my positionality and the idea that the participants opened up to me and were willing to share their experiences with me. Another key aspect of 'the participant as observer' is that "as well as observing through participating in activities, the observer can ask members of the group to explain various aspects of what is going on" (Robson, 2016, p.326). This links to the research, as the method of observation enabled me to ask diverse and broader questions linked to the focus of my research – for example, accessing the setting's policies and planning documents and using these and my observations as 'cues' to ask provocative questions to the two teachers. The observation data provided me with a springboard in which to generate further discussion and dialogue in the pre-schools. Robson (2016, p.326) reaffirms that participant observation "does not preclude or prescribe any approach to recording, providing the participants know and accept that you have this role and [understand] the task of the observer." This therefore involves acknowledgement of observer bias and issues in recording participant observations.

According to Burton and Bartlett (2009, p.117), there are some challenges and weaknesses in participant observation which may also be problematic within this investigation. For example, two of the aspects identified will need further consideration. First, it is acknowledged that it is difficult to observe and record at the same time. For example some observation schedules require recordings to be taken every few seconds. However, for this research, as the video recorder was on a tripod, I was able to intermittingly observe and make field notes while still continuing to film and follow the teachers. Second, the observer may affect the situation, which also links to being aware of and sensitive to ethical considerations. However, again linking to my positionality and the idea of praxeology and 'participatory practice', my aim was to ensure that the teachers felt that I was not there to judge but to celebrate and showcase their practice.

5.14 Interviewing

Within this study, the two teachers also took part in a combination of different interview types to reflect the socio-cultural approach to this investigation, opening up the possibility that "every word that people use in telling their stories is a microcosm of their consciousness" (Vygotsky, 1987, pp.236-237). For example, during voice one, the teachers were part of an unstructured interview where the basis of the whole video footage was generated and then edited through open dialogue with them. This was also the case with voice two where the teachers watched their edited videos and provided a commentary using the researcher's prompts on their values. However, the final exit video (voice four and Appendix Six), which brought together their

dialogue and reflections on each other's and their own practice, was agreed through a semi-structured interview. The differences will now be explored.

According to Yin (2014), one of the most pertinent sources of case study information is the interview. MacNaughton *et al.* (2001, p.54) highlight that "interviews allow case study researchers to explore the meanings that lie behind observed behaviours or documentary evidence." The interview, according to Fetterman (1998), is also the ethnographer's most important data gathering technique; interviews consolidate and put into a wider context what the ethnographer sees and experiences. This method involves questioning or discussing issues with people; this can be a very useful technique with which to collect data which would not be as accessible when using observations or questionnaires, as it allows the interviewer to pick up on non-verbal cues (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010). Yin (2014, p.90) develops this further and stipulates that interview questions carried out in a case study must be fluid rather than rigid in nature. He also alludes to the researcher having two jobs: "to follow their own line of enquiry and to ask the interview questions in an unbiased manner that also serves the needs of the researchers' line of enquiry." Wengraf (2001) describes some features of in-depth interviewing as designed in practice. This means that interviews are designed for the purpose of improving knowledge; it is a type of special conversational interaction and goes into matters in depth. It can be argued that this inquiry through the teacher's multiple voices aims to get 'under the surface' of the teacher's practice and requires a deep level of dialogue and conversations through interviewing.

Additionally, linking more specifically to the socio-cultural approach underpinning the data collection and methodology, there is the consideration of phenomenological interviewing within this research. This technique uses the teachers' stories within interviewing and reflection (teachers' initial values in voice one), focussed, in depth interviewing (based on video footage in voice two) and reflection on the meaning (written reflections, ranking of values and exit interview in voices three and four). Seidman (2006, p.32) states that the goal of phenomenologically-based interviewing is to have practitioners reconstruct their own experience within the topic under study. Thus, according to Patton (1989, in Seidman, 2006, p.56), "Without context there is little possibility of exploring the meaning of an experience." Some principles and strategies of phenomenological interviewing were used as an approach to interviewing within this research, enabling the teachers to reflect more deeply on their video stories and to revisit these several times to ascertain their 'best practice' for the final video footage.

In terms of the differences between semi structured and unstructured interviewing, Bryman (2016, p.466) proposes that the nature of unstructured interviews allows for "rambling and going off at tangents" as this "gives insight into what the interviewee sees as relevant and important." I also recognised how my role within the interviews was crucial in ensuring I allowed the participants to take the lead, as I was there to listen, respond and provide provocative questioning. This also provided an opportunity for more in-depth reflections from the participants. Cousin (2009, p.72) says,

"The interviewer is expected to adapt, modify and add to encourage the flow of the interview talk and to access and expand on the interviewee's understandings however tentative or contradictory these may be." As Guba and Lincoln (1994) have importantly noted, the interview is based on the premise that knowledge as meaning is relative and is produced through the interaction between the researcher and the researched. When comparing unstructured to semi structured interviews, Wengraf (2001) states that semi structured interviews are designed to have a number of interview questions prepared in advance, but such questions are designed to be sufficiently open so that subsequent questions from the interviewer cannot be planned in advance but must be improvised in a careful and theorised way. This was the case during voice four where I prepared several questions with some prompts which allowed flexibility for the teachers to add or make comments. I also used a range of techniques which linked to Gubrium and Holstein's (1997) style of 'active questioning', where I offered 'conceptual hooks' and used 'collective activities' to support an open dialogic direction for the teachers that further enabled them to express their views. This was a feature of all the interviews carried out in all four of the teachers' 'voices'. Denscombe (2017) claims that using semi-structured interviews as a method of data collection is beneficial for those wishing to collect information regarding experiences, opinions and emotions, and that interviews provide in-depth and detailed knowledge. Although a questionnaire may also provide detailed knowledge, it may be suggested that not only does it lack the option for clarity and a deeper understanding of personal emotions, but it is more time-consuming and requires a wider participant sample to gather credible

data (Burton and Bartlett, 2009). I also used Spradley's (1979) example and experience questions, where the teachers were asked to watch their own and each other's video footage and add to or provide further examples or make amendments to them. I developed what Bryman (2016, p.466) refers to as an 'aide-memoire' or what I term 'provocation', which was designed to make the participants' thinking more visible. Simons (2009) suggests that this type of interview is 'proactive', where probes that aim to provoke are used. For example, I asked the two teachers open ended questions, such as 'Why do you think this was the case?', 'Why did you follow X outside?' and 'What happened next…?' as part of the conversation. Provocative questioning is also a key feature of polyvocal ethnography.

In order to ensure a relaxed environment, the interviews took place in a quiet staff room at the pre-school settings. The schedule of events, as in Figure 5.2, meant that the teachers knew the calendar of events for all four days in advance so they could arrange to make themselves available. They were audio recorded with their consent and the interviews were then transcribed. There were several reasons why audio recording was undertaken. First, as these were individual one to one interviews, I wanted to capture the participants' responses accurately to ensure that I did not misrepresent them in the writing of their final stories. Second, I wanted to give my undivided attention to the two teachers and fully respond to their reflections (Simons 2009). As importantly, a third reason for audio recording was to gain the opportunity to fully interrogate the interview data by listening to the recordings several times. However, in transcribing the audio recordings, I

found out how time-consuming this process this can be. As Silverman (2016) points out, I also became aware of how audio-recording does not pick up naturally occurring nuances in the participants' responses, such as tone, facial expressions and meaning behind what is said or implied. For this reason, I also took brief field notes during the interviews. When the interviews were completed the video 'stories' were amended to create a final version which I then shared with the teachers. This provided another opportunity for the participants to amend their stories if they wished to. Several aspects of the video footage and the ranking of their values in voice one and voice two were adapted as a result of this process.

5.15 Sampling

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), sampling is a crucial element of the quality of a piece of research, and choosing the right sampling strategy is as vital as the appropriate methodology and data collection. They refer to five key factors which need to be judged in relation to sampling:

1. The sample size
2. The representativeness and parameters of the sample
3. Access to the sample
4. The sampling strategy to be used
5. The kind of research that is being undertaken

These will now be considered individually in relation to this research. In terms of the sample size, this was determined based on an evaluation of the pilot study (which will be considered in more depth on page 185) – videoing

more than one participant simultaneously created difficulties tracking individuals, which made it more challenging to collect meaningful, purposeful data. Therefore, a sample size of two teachers, one in Sweden and one in England, was decided, resonating with Geertz' (1993, p.10) interest in 'thick description' (as explained in more detail on page 159). The sample size was also considered and reflected upon at a PhD learning circle with other PhD students. Although investigating a wider sample was initially considered, it was felt that my interest in evaluating the differences and similarities between two teachers' values was best served by a smaller sample size.

In relation to 'representativeness' and 'parameters of the sample,' this study is not claiming that the findings can be generalised to the wider population. However, I have attempted to select two 'typical' pre-school settings and teachers, and this affords a degree of relatability and reflects my interest in illustration over generalisation. Thus, what one learns from that comparison is that the new knowledge generated has 'transferability' to others interested in pedagogy, social constructs, values and the learning experiences of pre-school children. Thus the similarities and differences between the two countries are analysed and contrasted, which can be useful to other researchers, academics and early years practitioners. In support of this idea, Gomm, Hammersley and Foster (2000) argue that in-depth research of specific instances in case studies can actually show causal processes in context which allows researchers to see which theoretical perspectives provide the best explanations. The issue of typicality within this investigation

is also considered under the sub-heading ‘Transferability’ within this chapter on page 200.

Moving onto the third factor in sampling, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), accessibility was gained by the fact that I knew and had the contact details of both head teachers prior to undertaking this research; this is discussed and explained below in 5.16 ‘Participants’. In relation to the sampling strategy used (the fourth factor), Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) suggest that there are two main sampling strategies: probability (known as random sampling) and non-probability (known as purposive sampling). In the case of this research the sample was purposive and included two experienced, qualified teachers who were ‘handpicked’, and as Kelly (2013) states, ‘competent teachers.’ Pen portraits of the two teachers can be found in the next sub-section, ‘Participants’ where I go on to justify why purposive sampling was an appropriate strategy for this study. Finally, my reflections on my pilot study (which involved four practitioners in an English pre-school) were key in guiding decisions on sampling. These affected the decisions I would make about the kind of research being undertaken (the fifth factor). A pilot study can unveil problems with data collection methods before undertaking the full study. It can also be useful to assess its effects on participants (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). This was particularly useful for this investigation as it was revealed that focussing on four practitioners presented a number of challenges. It also did not allow for the participants to show and evidence their individual practice in depth. Therefore it was decided that only one participant in each setting would be

included in the final study. Additionally, when asking one practitioner as part of the pilot study to reflect on her practice from the video footage, she was unable to articulate why she was doing what she was doing and could not relate this to the broader societal and political context in which she was situated. The practitioner spoke about her personal experiences in practice and those from having her own children. Though this was interesting, deeper critical reflection was needed to answer my research questions. Given that the pilot practitioner was qualified to level 3 in England, it was decided to focus on more highly qualified teachers in both countries in order to allow for deep reflective dialogue that would enable insights into their values.

5.16 The Participants

Ball (1993, in Hammersley, 1993, p.40) says, “Sampling involves careful and sometimes difficult decisions about how to use time, who to spend time with, and whom to seek out.” This implies that I needed to consider the importance of selecting participants carefully in relation to the type of data collected and the kind of interpretations that will result from them. Denscombe (2017, p.150) explains how purposive sampling is linked to the deliberate selection of participants because “they are seen as the most likely people to produce the most valuable data”, and in this sense it is an “economical” and “informative” way of determining the sample. With regards to the two teachers chosen for this research, I initially contacted the Head Teachers of both settings via email, explaining the focus of my research. I asked them to suggest two teachers in their setting who would be willing and

appropriate to participate in my research. For the purpose of this research a deep critical reflective dialogue was needed and therefore I decided to ask for two qualified and experienced teachers to be participants. Both came back with one suggested teacher and I asked them to outline their qualifications and experiences. Both teachers had an equal level of qualification and both had ten years' experience of teaching in a pre-school setting. The Head Teachers were connected to the researcher through two channels: the English Head Teacher was suggested by another PhD student who used to work at the setting; and I already knew the Swedish Head Teacher, having previously carried out my Masters data collection in her setting. As confirmed by Robson (2016, p.265), "The principle selection of purposive sampling is the researcher's judgement as to typicality or interest." This type of sampling also tends to be used in case studies and where participant observation is involved, as in this research. Kelly (2013), when exploring comparative pedagogy, refers to the selection of 'competent teachers':

> Competent teachers are those whose practice is uncluttered by issues of personal proficiency, who embody the cultures in which they work and who are effective in realising influential outcomes in their settings, outcomes which are mainly, but not always, assigned to the pupils.
>
> (Kelly, 2013, p.420)

Therefore, competent teachers (compared to less competent ones) generate higher and more robust achievements which are most highly regarded in specific cultures. Observation of their work provides a window on their pedagogic cultures (Kelly, 2013). Palmer *et al.* (2005, in Kelly, 2013)

proposed two stage selection criteria for choosing competent teachers: teachers should have three to five years' experience with a particular age group and national qualifications for the field in which they are currently teaching; they should also be recognised by their school leaders and other teachers for the quality of their teaching. These criteria match the participants chosen for this research. An overview of the participants can be found in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3 Overview of Participants

English teacher – Emily (this is her real name)	**Swedish teacher – Astrid** (this is a pseudonym as her real name is Emma but this was confusing as it was too similar to the English teacher's name when reporting the findings of this research)
Emily is 42 years old and completed a degree in Early Childhood Studies. She then completed her Post Graduate Certificate in Early Primary and therefore spent four years at university in England. She has worked in two previous pre-school settings and has been at the current setting (a nursery school) for two years. She is the setting's Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCO) and has been teaching for ten years. Emily has two children and works full-time and came into teaching as a mature student. She wants to provide children with the best learning opportunities and she compares her own practice to the standard she would want her own children to experience. Emily believes it is key to 'know the children' and their 'next steps'. She believes children learn	Astrid is 39 years old and completed a 4-year degree in pre-school teacher training in Sweden. Astrid has taught at another pre-school and has been at the current pre-school for six years. She has been teaching for ten years and has been to Reggio Emilia. She has also been part of the Swedish 'BRIC' research (a project that the pre-school is part of and focused on making children more visible in communities and public spaces). She attends Gothenburg university to undertake continuing professional development courses on a regular basis. Astrid has two children and works full-time. She believes that children learn through a project approach and that these should follow the children's interests. She believes the pre-school is a place for democracy and learning together

by being given practical learning experiences through play-based opportunities. She feels that children's well-being and interests are key aspects of her practice. Emily also works with other nurseries in the city and has engaged in continuing professional development courses with the local authority. She feels confident in using 'Development Matters' (DfE, 2014) as a guide but will use her professional judgement in terms of the needs and interests of the children.	and for children to be curious of each other, their different experiences and interests. She sees her role to plan, reflect and involve both colleagues and children in the activities. Astrid works closely with the 'Pedagogista' and other pre-school teachers and collaborates on their pedagogical practices. She feels the pre-school curriculum is a useful document which matches her values.

I contacted both teachers via email initially to explain the purpose of my research, and then I set up a visit to explain this in more depth and what it entailed, including ethical protocols and the methodological stages.

5.17 Interpretation of the Data

As the data collection methods employed for this research are multi-layered (using five stages as illustrated in Table 6.2), the method of data analysis and interpretation also needed to be multi layered. This is supported by Rapley (2011), who states that layering is a strength of qualitative research. My research questions demanded that I get under the surface of the data to identify saliences and patterns. For example, Research Question One requires that I look for the two teachers' values and what learning experiences they offer to children aged three to four. Research Question Two requires that I consider the teachers' roles in the learning experiences the children have. For Question Three, I need to consider the link between the teachers' values and their role, and how these relate to English and Swedish local and national educational policy. Research Question Four

involves a comparison of what has been revealed from Research Questions One, Two and Three. Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasise the importance of a researcher being explicit in how the data is analysed in order to evaluate their research. After exploring a number of ways to interpret the findings, I decided to use the principles of several methods of data analysis flexibly, following Patton's (2002, p.12) advice to use "the right tool for the right job". Rapley (2011, p.274) explains this further, claiming that "the practices of good qualitative data analysis can never be summed up by using a neat tag. They can also never be summed up by a list of specific steps or procedures that have been undertaken. Above all, you need to develop a working, hands on, empirical, tacit knowledge of analysis." According to Rapley (2011, p.222), this is called a "qualitative analytical attitude". To provide an overarching framework for the data analysis, I used Wolcott's (1994) three categories − description, analysis and interpretation (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 – Overview of Interpretation Stages

Description	**Analysis**	**Interpretation**
Process of reduction of 20-minute footage dialogue with written and oral reflections leading to ranking of teachers' values	Identification of key themes and comparisons from reflecting on their own and each other's practice through dialogue and written reflections and exit interview responses.	Exploration of comparison arising from the data linking to local and national policy and cultural influences and to develop recommendations

Within these three stages of interpretation, I also drew on the work of Braun and Clarke (2006; 2013) and their six phases of thematic analysis as a way of identifying and analysing patterns and saliences in the data. As Braun and Clarke (2013, p.120) comment, thematic analysis "is suited to a wide range of interests … it works with a wide range of research questions, from those about people's experiences or understandings to those about the representation and construction of particular phenomena in particular contexts." Using thematic analysis provided a framework that added rigour and flexibility to the interpretation of the findings. It is also paramount to note that it was not only the researcher going through the different categories advocated by Wolcott (1994) and Braun and Clarke (2013), but this was done in conjunction with the two teachers. In the spirit of polyvocal ethnography, the teachers' 'voices' and 'stories' needed to be at the centre of the data analysis process. At this point it must be reiterated that in this method, the videos of the pre-schools are not used as data but as a stimulus for data generation via discussion.

Stage 1 – The Descriptive Stage

In the descriptive stage Wolcott (1994, p.10) recommends that it is desirable to stay close to the original data. In writing a descriptive account there is the underlying assumption that within the data the participants 'speak for themselves'. This descriptive account includes long excerpts from the data using the participants' words, which makes it appear that they themselves are telling the stories. This was particularly relevant in terms of the two teachers in 'speaking directly to the research'. As Wolcott (1994) suggests,

it is important to be observant to the way a participant reveals his/her story to a researcher in terms of the process and thinking they have gone through. In this descriptive stage, Braun and Clarke's (2006) first phase of thematic analysis resonates, as they emphasise the importance of becoming familiar with the data. Watching and listening to the video recordings and making field notes during the first stage of the data collection process, filming was a way of achieving (for the researcher) what Braun and Clarke (2006, p.87) refer to as becoming 'immersed' in the data "to become familiar with the depth and breadth of the content." For the two teachers, this was revealed when they watched their videos back and were asked provocative questions about their practice through an unstructured interview process. This stage allowed the teachers to engage with the footage of their practice during the first stage of the data analysis process. An example of this unstructured interview dialogue (which was recorded) can be found in an example transcript in Appendix Seven (from the English teacher) and Appendix Eight (the Swedish teacher). This stage of data analysis was key for this investigation: from open-ended provocative questioning and prompting of key moments from my field-notes and observations, the teachers started to identify 'stories' in their video footage. This gave the videos a structure and a focus. The teachers then began a process of elimination in terms of what they would like to exclude from the final footage. This involved a negotiated dialogue that included the teachers' voices, interpretations and perspectives.

Building on this, I used Wolcott's descriptive stage and also Braun and Clarke's (2006) second phase of thematic analysis in beginning to code the

data. This coding involved working “systematically through the entire data set, giving full and equal attention to each data set item and identify[ing] interesting aspects in the data items that may form the basis of repeated patterns” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.89). However, using coding in this way led to the recognition of the impact of my personal involvement in collecting the data, and how immersed I may have become in terms of influencing how I coded the teachers’ responses (Miles, Huberman and Salanda, 2014). I was therefore aware of Marshall and Rossman’s (2006) view that coding the social world in terms of generalisations destroys valuable data, in this case by imposing a limited view on the two teachers. I became aware of a contradiction in my views here in that while I preferred to give a voice to the participants, I could not ignore how my own thinking about the data would influence interpretations. I therefore stopped and reflected on the research process and again, in the spirit of polyvocal ethnography, I decided to go back to the teachers to ask them to code the data through mutual dialogue with me as the researcher. This involved viewing the edited footage from phase one of thematic analysis. This phase involved closer investigation and discussion over what ‘stories’ would feature in the final footage and how this reflected the teachers’ values through an unstructured interview and dialogue while watching the footage again. The interviews were voice-recorded in both pre-schools and then transcribed. Emerging themes and comments came more to the forefront of the conversations between the teachers and me, and together we began to finalise the footage and also a list of their values elicited from our discussions. Both teachers brainstormed and noted down their values, which alongside the video footage interview gave rise to further

in-depth discussions, analysis and evaluation of their practice. The lists of values were generated based on the frequency of the words and phrases used when reviewing the video footage. This then allowed me to produce a hierarchy of the teachers' values, based on their own reflections of which values they felt were of higher priority. I then left the teachers to reflect on their generated list of values. To make the video footage I used Movie Maker (for which I had previously attended training); I was able to edit, amend and cut sections of the video footage as dictated by the teachers.

Stage 2 – The Analysis Stage

Wolcott's stages of interpretation move from the descriptive account and initial coding to begin to systematically analyse saliences, relationships and patterns to develop broader themes across the stages of the two teachers' voices. As Rapley (2011, p.285) proposes, "Qualitative research is an iterative practice; its strength can lie in the process of collecting something, drawing out key issues, then going on to discover … how relevant that issue is in a different context with a different person." Additionally, as this study is comparative, I used Crossley and Watson's (2003) exploratory comparative method, manually allocating preliminary codes (such as the outdoor environment and the rights of the child) to emerging saliences and themes in each 'national' dataset, some of which were kept, and others revised while carrying out ongoing analysis.

I then went back to the two teachers and asked them to view their video footage again and reflect on this and their values. I left them independently

to do this, again, over a two week period. We then met again (via SKYPE in Sweden) to talk through their video footage. They both made some changes and reflected on their values and amended the rankings based on their reflections and our dialogue. What we discussed at this point were the titles and stories for the different parts of the video footage. This was actually suggested by the English teacher which I replicated with the Swedish teacher. This gave the videos a structure and order, and allowed them to have a narrative. It was also easier to refer back to and discuss certain aspects of the film by referring to particular stories.

Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) third phase of analysis of searching for themes, I began to think about the relationship between different codes to develop potential themes. As a result of this analysis, I then asked the teachers to watch each other's videos (voice 4 as articulated in Table 5.1 on page 153) and to consider the similarities in their practice to begin with. This would lead to identified themes which could be explored as a basis for analysis of the findings, stimulated by watching the footage.

Both teachers agreed that the 'role of the adult' was a similarity as well as the 'environment.' The other themes emerged from a deeper discussion and sharing of the hierarchy of the teachers' values with each other. From this second phase of coding, the 'rights of the child' theme was generated, and the Swedish teacher also felt that the theme 'how children learn' was a similarity when watching the English teachers' footage. The theme 'relationships' was identified by the Swedish teacher, as she felt that this had some similarities but was also a difference in their practice. Therefore, after

further dialogue and discussion via email with both teachers, the five themes were generated for the purpose of this study.

Following on from this, phase four of reviewing and refining themes, as advocated by Braun and Clarke (2006), was useful for ensuring that data within themes joined together in a meaningful way. This was particularly important as this study is comparative and looking at saliences between the two teachers in England and Sweden. As Braun and Clarke (2006, p.92) comment, “At the end of this phase, you should have a fairly good idea of what your different themes are, how they fit together, and the overall story they tell about your data.” However, I was aware that it was not enough to identify themes; I needed to reveal the story each theme showed by not just presenting extracts but also highlighting what was interesting about them and why (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This is a key feature of polyvocal ethnography, where video recorded narratives of a typical day in a preschool are a starting point for discussion as first voices in a dialogically structured text (Tobin and Davidson, 1990). Therefore, I also needed to consider how my themes fitted into the overall story which I was telling about the data, as well as considering the ongoing dialogue and reflections between the teachers and researcher through the data collection process. I used Braun and Clarke’s (2006, p.92) fifth phase of analysis (defining and naming themes) which recommends returning to the data extracts for each theme so that I could “organise them into a coherent and internally consistent account, with accompanying narrative.”

As in a comparative study by Bartram, Hathaway and Rao (2018, p.1290), "Once the data had been fully coded, the codes and labels applied were scrutinised to allow an inductive process of category building. The categories from each dataset were subsequently juxtaposed to facilitate comparison and questioning." The data was then further scrutinised and reviewed in light of the categories identified to check for appropriateness of themes (Braun and Clarke 2013). The teachers were both in agreement with the final themes, drawing on the commonalities as well as the differences between their video footage.

Stage 3 – The Interpretation Stage

In the writing up of my findings, I wove together extracts from the data with reflective accounts to develop a coherent story that was contextualised in relation to my research questions and existing literature (Braun and Clarke, 2006). However, Wolcott (1994, pp.10-11) argues that interpreting also involves making "sense of what goes on, to reach out for understanding or explanation beyond the limits of what can be explained with the degree of certainty usually associated with analysis." Similarly, Braun and Clarke (2006, p.94), in their sixth phase of analysis of writing up, argue that "claims need to be grounded in, but go beyond, the surface of the data." These wider social issues were related to institutional practices and policies as well as situated in the context of national policies and the saliences between them in England and Sweden. The final stage of interpretation involved the development of the contribution to knowledge resulting from this research, which is revealed in the final aspect of this thesis.

5.18 Credibility of the Research

Shenton (2004), when referring to the work of Guba and Lincoln (1994) and in an attempt to make naturalistic researchers distinct from the positivist paradigm which embraces the concepts of validity and reliability, refers to four criteria which he believes should be considered by qualitative researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study:

- Credibility (in preference to internal validity)
- Transferability (in preference to external validity/generalisability)
- Dependability (in preference to reliability)
- Confirmability (in preference to objectivity).

These will now be considered one by one in relation to the focus of this research.

5.18.1 Credibility

In relation to credibility, Guba and Lincoln (1989, in Shenton, 2004, p.64) argue that "ensuring credibility is one of the most importance factors in establishing trustworthiness." Shenton (2004) provides examples of ensuring credibility such as using the correct methods of data collection for the concepts being studied; he suggests that data should be collected by those who have knowledge of the field which they are studying. This is something which has been considered in relation to my positionality, as I was also an early years teacher and therefore understand the early years working environment. Shenton (2004) refers to the importance of developing early familiarity with the settings; I therefore spent several 'sessions' with the teachers in both England and Sweden as well as the setting managers. As

the researcher, I came into the settings early and stayed after the children had left in case practitioners in the settings, or parents, wanted to ask any questions to establish a relationship of trust. Diagram 6.2 illustrates the research design and process which considers how the teachers 'talked to the research' through mutual and open-ended dialogue. I developed a rapport with both teachers, and indeed with other practitioners within the setting. I was open, honest and transparent about my research intent as well as having open-ended discussions and dialogue, including iterative questioning through the rephrasing of questions, as the teachers watched the 'day in the life of' video, to prompt their thinking. They were asked to 'check' the video before and after the editing process to make sure it reflected what they intended it to, and indeed their own values. As a consequence of this process some changes were made. The teachers were asked to 'rank' their values (as discussed in the data analysis section); both teachers reflected on and changed their values and adapted some of their vocabulary or their meanings, through what Shenton (2004) refers to as 'member checks'. 'Thick description' (Geertz, 1993) is another aspect of credibility, according to Shenton (2004); this was a concept considered earlier on in this chapter in terms of how it applies to this investigation.

5.18.2 Transferability

Shenton (2004) refers to transferability which, according to Merriam (2002, in Shenton, 2004, p.69), "is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations". Unlike positivist studies which often determine the results of a study in terms of how these can be applied to

a wider population, qualitative studies like this one are specific to a small number of particular environments and people, and therefore I do not claim that this study and its findings are applicable to other situations or populations (Robson, 2016). As this study focuses on the in-depth reflections of two teachers, although the findings may reflect the views of other teachers they are not automatically generalisable to all teachers and pre-school settings. However, as Denscombe (2017) reminds us, although each case study may be unique, it is also an example of a broader group, and transferability should not be immediately rejected. According to Gomm, Hammersley and Foster (2009), in-depth research of specific instances in case studies can actually show causal processes in context, which allows researchers to see which theoretical perspectives provide the best explanations.

Robson (2016, p.370) believes that that there are several advantages to using multiple methods, including “the reduction of inappropriate certainty” and “permitting triangulation”. This ‘triangulation’ of data collection methods within the research helped to address issues of credibility and trustworthiness. It provided the opportunity to look at the key issues from different standpoints, as “the central point of triangulation is to examine the research topic or focus from a number of different vantage points” (Birley and Moreland, 1998, p. 43).

5.18.3 Dependability

Dependability is the third category of trustworthiness in qualitative research, according to Shenton (2004); this requirement is met by the fact that this study is designed on the clear understanding that credibility and dependability are interlinked. Positivists would refer to reliability and would employ techniques to show that if the work was repeated in the same context, with the same methods and participants, then the results would be the same. In addition, keeping field notes and voice recordings has ensured detailed data gathering. Shenton (2004) also refers to triangulation in relation to dependability and the use of different methods in terms of indicating to the teachers that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions being asked. To also add dependability to this study, I carried out a pilot study in a pre-school setting in England with several early years practitioners. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), a pilot study can be used to judge the effects of research on participants. The authors also refer to 'cross cultural validity' where the researcher "seeks to understand similarities and differences between cultures and their members" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.190), as is the case in this research. The pilot study allowed me to have the opportunity to check my filming skills as well as identifying that I need to focus on one practitioner rather than several. It became apparent that it was challenging to identify the role of the adult and the experiences of several participants across different areas of the pre-school environment.

5.18.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is the fourth category of trustworthiness; the concept of confirmability "is the qualitative investigator's comparable concern to objectivity" (Shenton, 2004, p.72). This refers to the steps that are taken to ensure, as far as possible, that the findings are drawn from the ideas and experiences of participants rather than researchers. There is evidence of this within the data collection, as it is the participants' 'stories' and their 'day in the life of' videos which are the focus of the investigation, as is the idea that the teachers talk to the researcher. Another aspect of confirmability is how the data collected should be discussed with participants, and this requires an ongoing reflective commentary. This was a key factor within the data collection process. The concept of ongoing dialogue is the main feature of polyvocal ethnography and having an 'audit trail.' This can be evidenced through the four stages of the research process and the two teachers being asked to reflect on their values overall at the end of the research process.

5.19 Ethics

In defining ethics, Robson (2016) says that they refer to general principles of what one ought to do; he further suggests that difficulties often arise at the beginning of a study. This may be particularly relevant when undertaking research where young children are part of the investigation, as issues of protection and safeguarding the children's interests arise – can children truly appreciate what is involved? Equally, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011 p.56) emphasise the need for researchers to "take into account the effects of the research on participants, and act in such a way as to preserve their

dignity as human beings." When considering ethics, Webster, Lewis and Brown (2014, p.78) comment that "good ethical qualitative research means being able to anticipate what might arise but also to respond to the unexpected … It means developing an ethical conscience that puts participants' interests at the heart of decision making." Thus, I have learnt that ethical issues are ongoing, not to be thought of only at the beginning of the research but throughout the whole research process. The use of an 'ethical radar' (Skanfors, 2009) ensured that I was alert to expressions of acceptance and withdrawal during the video and follow up interviews. Continual awareness of ethics helped to identity ethical issues as they arose, what caused a dilemma and how I could overcome it. This is particularly important in relation to the sensitivity of the children, who are part of the setting, and to have regard for their welfare during the research process. This may include an awareness of their ability to communicate and take part, as well as their ability to choose to participate.

I followed the ethical procedures of the university and applied for approval. My application was accepted and there was no challenge to the steps I was taking to ensure that the research was ethical in its design. I also had a critical dialogue with a member of the university's ethics committee whom I asked to question, check and challenge me on my ethical procedures for this investigation. This gave me the opportunity to reflect on my ethical code of conduct and practice for this research. During a PhD Learning Circle at 'The Centre for Research in Early Childhood' a professional cameraman came to talk to the group about using video in research. He spoke about the ethics of

using the camera and the importance of asking setting managers, all practitioners and children's parents/guardians for written consent, clearly outlining the intent and purpose of the research. I asked for written consent from the setting managers (Appendix Two) and they both agreed that the video could have the setting name visible. I sought written permission from all the practitioners (Appendix Three) within the settings, so that they were aware of the purpose of my research and in case they featured in the video during my filming. Both of the teachers who were part of this study were keen to have their participation publicly acknowledged and were willing to waive their right to anonymity. This also included a risk assessment of using the camera (Appendix Five) which I carried out on my familiarity visit at the pre-school settings.

Additionally, Brooker (2002 p.177) outlines several ethical considerations when planning to converse with children, including "being honest and open with the children who are our participants", "the power relations of the interview situation", "the importance of familiarity", and "the importance of sensitivity to social class and cultural differences".

In consideration of these issues, parents or guardians were asked to give consent (Appendix Four), and this was achieved with the use of a written permission sheet, translated for Swedish parents and adhering to BERA (2018) ethical guidelines for gaining informed and confirmed consent. Robson (2016) refers to the common assumption that the consent of parents/guardians will suffice, often due to a belief in the lack of competence

of children to express their own consent. Cohen *et al.* (2011 p.52) believe that it is important to consider this, stating that "researchers must provide a credible and meaningful explanation of their research intention". They further suggest that "children must be given a real and legitimate opportunity to say that they do not want to take part." It is worthy of note that although parental consent was sought, parents were often not present during the research so had little knowledge of what happened or whether any distress might be caused to their child (Robson, 2016). Robson (2016 p.70) queries "whether such participants can rationally, knowingly and freely give informed consent." The video camera was set up the day before recording began so that the children were familiar with the equipment. The children were asked to consider if they minded being part of the research and being filmed, and it was made clear that they had a right to say 'No.' All the children were asked to express their wishes to me, or their parents or guardians, or their key worker within the pre-school setting. Children were also informed of the aims of the research and I made myself available for any questions or queries that they might have. Consent from the children was obtained in a manner that was meaningful, child-friendly and age-appropriate (EECERA, 2014). For the Swedish children (who between them spoke nine different languages) the purpose of the study was translated firstly into Swedish by the Swedish teacher. I then read the consent form in English as many of the children were able to understand some English, according to the Swedish teacher (Astrid). With Astrid's support we then used hand gestures such as pointing at the video recorder and parts of the classroom including the outdoors, to indicate that I was going to be videoing the activities inside and outside the

pre-school setting. Astrid and I spoke very slowly and clearly with some pauses to ensure the children could process and understand what was being said as much as possible. Astrid then confirmed to me that, from knowing the children and answering their questions, she felt they fully understood what the research purpose was and what it involved. She was happy that the children were informed of the purpose of the research. The 'appropriateness' of this can be judged by the fact that the researcher is trained and experienced with children aged three to four and therefore was able to gain assent from the children in a way that they understood (BERA 2018).

5.20 Limitations of the Research

One of the main criticisms of adopting an interpretative approach is that it can be subjective, which makes reliability and validity difficult to measure. Ball (1993, in Hammersley, 1993, p.43) argues, "The complexity and the 'becomingness' of social life belie the possibility of a single exhaustive, or definitive account. And as an analytical decision-making process, we should expect different researchers to pick their way through fieldwork differently." Throughout this chapter, issues of trustworthiness, credibility and transferability have been considered, although I do recognise that there would perhaps be variations in findings if another researcher undertook similar fieldwork. "Keeping meticulous records", "using detailed transcripts", and "taking field notes of all communications and reflective thinking activities during the research process" have helped to maintain a "chain of evidence" (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998, p.134). This has also provided verification of

how the research was undertaken, and substantiates how conclusions were drawn from the collected data and in the analysis.

Another limitation to consider is the reliability of informants' information. In this research, they were being asked to reflect upon their own values. It is important to ensure that the analysis of data is not descriptive, so I will summarise key findings, adopting a broad analysis of the content of the interviews, observations and reflections to identify similarities or differences between the teachers' responses in Sweden and England. Kalliala (1999) believes that the analysis of information can be a difficult task and suggests that when interpreting qualitative data, the emphasis should not be on the quantity of similar examples, but rather on emerging issues and contradictions. The analysis of data should evolve as "an exploration of interrelationships between elements of the study" (MacNaughton *et al*., 2001, p.128), whereby data collected from the interviews is analysed according to key issues that have arisen, i.e. their values and teaching strategies in relation to the learning experiences that should be offered to children aged three to four. As MacNaughton *et al.* (2001, p.133) state, "The major virtue of qualitative studies is their capacity to tell a well-substantiated story. These stories are strengthened by using voices from the field, or detailed snapshots of the field, to bring to life arguments being pursued in the research report." In addition, the use of empirical research identified within the literature review was utilised when exploring the data and evaluating my findings.

Before videoing commenced, visits were set up in both settings to ensure that children and adults were familiar with the researcher's presence and to gain orientation. This was more problematic to instigate in Sweden, due to only having a set number of days to carry out the research. This is potentially a flaw with comparative research, as confirmed by Scott (2000), who outlines several reasons why developing orientation and familiarity is crucial. For example, the encouragement of more informative responses improves the quality of the data. The social context is especially important as it can affect a child's presentation and behaviour, i.e. how they respond. As the children were part of the videoing this is something I needed to consider, even though I was not observing the children but focussing on the teacher for the purpose of this research. Establishing interaction and participating in their activities beforehand limited the changes in the children's behaviour. Robson (2016) says that, when observing, it is important to try and minimise the effect a researcher may have on the behaviour of children. Similarly, MacNaughton *et al.* (2001, p.232) suggest a way of improving observational skills using a "sit and watch phase"; this helps "to gain a better understanding of the behaviours of interest". The period of familiarisation within the setting prior to data collection provided not only the opportunity to develop a good relationship with the children and the practitioners but also a chance to gain an understanding of the actual pre-school layout itself. This included the adult expectations placed upon the children and the daily routines and organisation of the learning environment.

5.21 Constraints

Additionally, the constraints relating to the completion of this research need to be acknowledged. This discussion has been included as a way of reflecting on the technical limitations of the research after collecting the data; a more critical reflection on the findings can be found in Chapter Seven. At first, I was wary of generalising about two teachers' 'day in the life of' stories, but this in itself added to the validity of the research. The development of two stories can contribute to the body of research around pedagogy, values, children's pre-school experiences and comparative research. I could have included more participants but I was concerned that this would dilute the depth of the teachers' stories, and I considered that two stories obtained through the use of polyvocal ethnography would provide the breadth needed for this study. Also, the fact that I am an English speaking researcher and do not speak Swedish is a constraint of this study. While filming, although I could not understand the language and this was a challenge at times (this has been considered in more depth under the heading 'the challenges and benefits of videoing'), I could observe what Astrid's role was and the experiences that she was providing.

I visited and sent frequent emails, having SKYPE and telephone conversations with the two teachers prior to the actual filming and for the first phase of data collection, which was useful in diminishing the impact of power relationships. I developed a rapport with the teachers and put them at ease about the video footage and the purpose of the research. Perhaps, at times, the teachers may have chosen sections of video which they felt I would

consider provocative and interesting, and there was a tendency for general agreement rather than a debate over which pieces of footage should feature in the final video. Over the course of the day, it also took time for the teachers to feel confident and comfortable with being videoed, although both teachers said that they did not particularly like being videoed at all but after a while they did get used to it.

The pilot study (as considered on page 185) revealed two challenges in terms of the video footage and also the choice of participants. For example, the video for the pilot study focussed on several practitioners within the pre-school setting and tracked them during their 'daily practice.' However, when watching the video back and trying to edit it, there was no 'story' and there was a blurring in terms of which practitioner to focus on, especially when the practitioners were all in different areas of the pre-school setting. Also, the practitioners used for the pilot study were level 3 qualified English early years practitioners. When watching and reflecting on the 'day in the life of' video, the practitioners reflected purely on their own personal stories rather than the curriculum and theory and the rhetoric underpinning them. Therefore this affected the choice of participants being included for the purpose of this research. Finally, I found that it was very challenging to use the video recorder and edit the video, and I sought extra support from a video producer so that my recording and editing skills were of a suitable standard for the research.

5.22 Conclusion to the Chapter

In this chapter, I have outlined the design of this research and also some of the limitations. Writing about and acknowledging my positionality and the design has provided me with the opportunity to think carefully about the challenges and possible solutions. The positionality aspect of this chapter also brought to the surface further justification for my study's focus and the formulation of its title and the four research questions underpinning it. The design of the enquiry adopted a socio-cultural approach that embraced the principles of several different socio-cultural methods, linking to the underpinning stance of this investigation and looking at the participants in the context of where they are situated. While this can add complexity to the research design, it also provides the opportunity to be innovative and open to contrasting methodological approaches, ensuring that the methods selected fit the research best in answering the research questions. I felt that using polyvocal ethnography was the most effective way in which to ascertain practitioners' values and bring these values to the surface of their practice by using real life video footage. The video also captured their role (Research Question Two) and the learning experiences they provide (Research Question One), allowing them to carefully watch and reflect on their everyday practices and compare the differences and similarities (Research Question Four). This also allowed for an examination of the influence of local and national policy and its impact when the teachers viewed each other's footage (voice 4) and in the reflective dialogue that took place (Research Question Three). I have argued that this research is based on ethnographic principles in terms of wanting to capture a day in the life of two teachers as they

engage in their everyday teaching practices. Furthermore, the adoption of 'thick description' and using polyvocal ethnography as a tool to engage the teachers in a reflective dialogue enabled the experiences of the participants to become more visible, as it involved not just the present but the non-present, the past and the possible (Goodley and Clough, 2004). This exploratory case study aimed to describe authentic experiences and deal with issues in-depth through the teachers' 'voices'. The next chapter provides an interpretation of the research findings and is aligned to the notion that researchers become storytellers, inviting the reader/listener to see through their eyes what they have seen and then offering an interpretation.

Chapter Six – Interpretation of Findings

6.1 Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter involves an interpretation of two teachers' 'voices' and represents their values in relation to their role when providing experiences for three and four year olds in English and Swedish pre-school settings. Underpinning the four stages of this chapter will be analyses and discussion of the findings of the research and examples of where these are consistent with the ideas, concepts and theories discussed in the literature review.

6.2 Framework for Analysis of Findings

Rather than use my research questions as a structure to analyse the data, the questions are interwoven using a thematic approach. This approach, interlinked with the methodology of polyvocal ethnography and the patterns of frequency derived from the data from the two teachers, was found to be the most effective way in which to present the findings. The conceptual framework 'Situated Pedagogy' shown in Figure 2.2 (page 43), developed from Rogoff (2003) and Habermas (1987), was utilised to help interpret the data. This will now be explained and justified further in relation to the use of 'parts' and 'stages', as a structure for the findings (see Table 6.1). This has been simplified from Figure 2.2 to demonstrate the justification specifically for this chapter, although the underpinning framework is the same.

Table 6.1 Conceptual Framework

PART ONE		PART TWO	
Stage One Video a day in the life of an English and Swedish pre-school teacher, choosing different stories (based on researchers' notes as a prompt) Edit video footage with teachers to 20 minutes	Stage Two Teachers watch and reflect on their own practice through written reflections and 'ranking' of values	Stage Three Teachers watch and reflect on each other's practice through written reflections	Stage Four Interpretation of teachers' responses to the video themes, comparing responses and exit interview
Personal Plane (Rogoff) /Communicative Actions Habermas)	Personal plane (Rogoff) /Communicative Actions (Habermas)	Interpersonal Plane (Rogoff)/ Lifeworld (Habermas)	Community Plane (Rogoff)/ System (Habermas)

As explained on page 42, this 'Findings' chapter will apply Rogoff's (2003) 'Three Planes of Analysis' as lenses to investigate teachers' values through their 'voices' at three levels: community, interpersonal and personal. Part one (Stages one and two) of the findings will focus on the personal level (the interaction between the teachers and the children). Part two (Stage three) will focus on the interpersonal level (how the beliefs of teachers linking to the curricula are put into practice), and finally Stage four will be related to the community plane (pedagogy is shaped by this plane in the form of policies and structures in a particular context). Thus the findings will be presented in two parts: Stages one and two will be discussed in part one and Stages three

and four in part two. Structuring the findings in this way was found to be a more useful way of capturing the two teachers' voices. To clarify this further, the 'parts' represent the values of the teachers from an individual level (part one) and a setting, community and society level (part 2). The 'stages' are the different processes that the teachers went through in order to determine their values in part one and part two. To provide a context for Research Question One and Two, under the heading Stage one, I interpret the teacher's voices by asking them to reflect on their practice by using the 'day in the life of' video as a tool to stimulate a dialogue. Following on from this in 'Stage two', I interpret the teacher's reflections and dialogue on their own practice which generated a ranking of their values. Thus, Stage one and two will be interwoven together, as these are closely aligned to Research Questions One and Two and how the teachers interpret and reflect on their values. The interpretation then goes on to Stage three, part two, which addresses Research Question One, Two and Four, where the teachers reflect on each other's practice through dialogue and written reflections, and these are then compared. Finally, I explore Stage four in the closing section of part two, linking together Research Questions Three and Four where the Swedish and English teachers' reflections from Stage one, two and three will be interpreted and compared. This also includes an analysis of the exit interview to reveal how their values relate to local and national policy guidelines. To identify the teachers' values in part one, two and three, the researcher developed five themes which have been introduced on page 43 and used as a structure for the literature review, linking the teachers' values together based on the frequency with which they made reference to them. In

the spirit of polyvocal ethnography, the teachers' voices were heard in the data collection process as the five themes were discussed and negotiated with them, as identified and explained under the heading 'Interpretation of the Data Analysis' in Chapter Five.

The five themes which underpin the findings are:

- How children learn
- Pedagogical approaches
- Rights of the child
- Relationships
- Learning environment

6.3 The 'Day in the Life of' Stories

In watching the unedited recordings for the preparation of the 'day in the life of' videos, both teachers were very clear which footage they would like to feature in the final 20-minute edited video. I ensured that they were clear that the final 20-minute video was to be a celebration of their 'best' practice. The chosen video footage extracts were put into 'stories' and labelled by the teachers after ongoing dialogue and discussion. Five stories were generated for the English setting and seven for the Swedish setting. Figures 6.2 and 6.3 show a summary of the English and Swedish teachers' 'stories', and Appendix One consists of the English and Swedish pre-school setting 20-minute footage. The Swedish teacher will be referred to as Astrid and the English teacher as Emily.

Table 6.2 English Setting Five Stories Summary

Story one – 'Eddie'	This is a forest school session led by a forest school practitioner. Emily is working on a one to one basis with Eddie who has cerebral palsy and a weakness in the left side of his body. Using clay and a rolling pin they make different objects and talk about the shape and texture of them.
Story two – 'Clay Around the Table'	Here the teacher has five spaces around a table indoors with clay and various materials in which to manipulate the clay. This is a 'choice' activity during a free play session. Several children join in the session.
Story three – 'Reflecting on Their Play'	This story involves the teacher with her key group reflecting on the play session they have just had. It involves two children talking about how they put pipes together to make water flow through. The teacher asks them lots of questions about this, also involving the other children. The idea is that the children share ideas and that other children may try out the activity later on in their play.
Story four – 'Letters and Sounds Extension Group'	The letters and sounds are an extension group, which happens weekly. The children had only been attending it for a few weeks, but it is a special time for those children who need a specific push in phonics and reading as they will be going to school in a few months.
Story five – 'Reading a Core Book'	This story involves reading a core book like 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' for a series of weeks so that the children get to know the structure of the story and the characters. The role play area is also set up as this story, so the children can replay the story or adapt it to make up their own version.

Table 6.3 Swedish Setting Seven Stories Summary

Story one – 'Morning Assembly'	This is where all the children gather together every morning, look at pictures of each other and ask questions about each other's interests and experiences and how the others are feeling. This includes children not in pre-school that day. They then reflect and look back at the work of Sebastian from the previous day. Using a projector, they evaluate and talk about his drawing of 'Kusama's houseboat'.

Story two – ‘In the Atelier’	The children who were inspired by Sebastian’s drawing have the opportunity to create what they think Kusama’s house might look like, by drawing in the atelier. They use pens to draw the designs and then could use colour, if they want to. The children work on this task until they feel satisfied with their own drawing. More children join to make drawings when there is space for them around the table.
Story three – ‘Joline’	Joline wants to make her drawing on plastic (a technique introduced earlier to the children), and see her drawing magnified on the wall. Using the overhead projector the teacher and Joline talk about different concepts and solutions that appear during the process of magnifying her drawing.
Story four – ‘Lunchtime’	The teacher sits with a group of six children and they have lunch together. They pass the food to each other and they talk together about the food, the tastes and any topics that might come up from the children or the teacher.
Story five – ‘At the Construction Area’	Daris is in the construction area where he has previously made constructions in the context of the project ’Kusama’s house’. He is telling the teacher how he made his construction. The teacher documents this with pen, paper and camera, to be able to remember, come back to, remind herself and refer to this narrative in the collective project documentation.
Story six – ‘Pokémon on the iPad’	Pikachu, one of the Pokémon figures, is currently popular amongst a group of children. On this occasion the children want to draw, and together the teacher and the children look at the features of the figure on the iPad.
Story seven – ‘Millie’	This part of the filming is outside and Millie wants to use and work with the researcher’s video recorder. Millie ended up filming the teacher and the researcher and was the ‘leader’ in this story.

Before exploring the five themes further, 'wordles' were used (Figures 6.4 and 6.5) to demonstrate the values of the English and Swedish teachers which were gathered during Stage two of the data collection process. The higher the teachers ranked and prioritised the particular value, the larger the word appears.

Figure 6.4 English Wordle

Figure 6.5 – Swedish Wordle

The four tables below show the English teacher's (Table 6.6) and Swedish teacher's (Table 6.7) ranking of their values. Table 6.8 shows the similarities in what the teachers said, with matching values in bold (i.e. where both teachers expressed the exact same value). These have been put into the five themes discussed previously. Table 6.9 shows the teachers' values that were specific to the English and Swedish teachers and therefore illustrates the differences between their values, highlighted in bold. These will be investigated throughout the chapter.

Table 6.6 English teacher's ranking of her values

1.	Safe and secure
2.	Learning through play
3.	Development of Personal Social Emotional Development (PSED) and emotional intelligence
4.	Knowing each child through key worker groupings
5.	Skilled caring practitioners.
6.	Understanding child development and the expected stages
7.	Rights of the child and their voice
8.	Parental relationships
9.	Inclusive
10.	Well resourced, differentiated, accessible and provoking environment
11.	Child's level of involvement
12.	Independence
13.	Meaningful experiences
14.	Purposeful learning

15.	Concrete experiences
16.	Free flow
17.	Reflections from both staff and children
18.	Open ended questioning
19.	Scaffolding
20.	Peer learning
21.	Modelling
22.	Outdoors/forest school
23.	Problem solving
24.	Extending learning
25.	Bringing home into school
26.	Characteristics of effective learning
27.	Time to think
28.	Empowered enthusiastic children

Table 6.7 Swedish teacher's ranking of her values

1.	Project work
2.	Reflect, review and evaluate
3.	Whole learning
4.	Peer learning (learning from each other)
5.	Parental relationships (parental involvement)
6.	Co-creation
7.	Creativity
8.	Independence
9.	Linking competences of children
10.	Children's interests

11. Stimulating environment
12. Materials used in different ways
13. Different perspectives
14. Different areas
15. Variety of resources
16. Making connections
17. Listening
18. Voice
19. Outdoors
20. Natural materials
21. Whole child
22. Bringing home/culture into school
23. Public spaces for learning
24. Part of community/society
25. Challenge
26. Different languages
27. First hand experiences
28. Access to environment
29. Talking to children
30. Knowing the children
31. Spontaneous
32. Engaged
33. Social
34. Assessing through documentation
35. Modelling
36. Valuing what children say

Table 6.8 Similarities in Teachers' Values (linked to five themes)

How Children Learn	Pedagogical Approaches	Rights of the Child	Relationships	Environment
• Whole learning • Development of PSED and emotional intelligence • Social • Co-creation • Creativity • Characteristics of effective learning • Different perspectives • Purposeful learning • Involvement • Concrete experiences • First hand experiences	• Learning through play • **Independence** • Children's interests • Spontaneous • **Reflection** • Open ended questioning • Talking to children • Scaffolding • **Modelling** • Extending learning • Challenge • Children's interests • Making connections • Whole child • **Knowing the children** • Problem solving	• Empowered enthusiastic children • Valuing what children say • Rights of the children and their voice • Listening • Time to think	• **Parent** • **Relationships** • **Bringing home into school** • **Peer learning**	• Stimulating environment • Child's level of involvement • Materials used in different ways • Different areas • Variety of resources • Well resourced, accessible and provoking environment • Free flow • **Outdoors**

Table 6.9 Differences in Teachers' Values

English teacher	Swedish teacher
• Skilled caring practitioners • Understanding child development and the expected stages • Inclusive • Problem solving	• Project work • Reflect, review and evaluate • Linking competences of children • Public spaces for learning • Part of community/society • Different languages • Assessing through documentation • Natural materials

Part 1-Stage One and Two – Personal and Communicative Actions

The findings will now be analysed and evaluated using the five key themes. This section will be underpinned by the teachers' stories from their videos and their reflections on them. The stories will be used to illustrate the teachers' reflections on how they represent their values.

6.4 Part One – How Children Learn

The literature revealed a growing recognition that the way in which children are viewed and how they learn is socially and culturally constructed. There was also a general consensus that children should be active and not passive recipients of information. This allows children to make connections through meaningful experiences, as all children will interpret their world differently (Anning *et al.,* 2009).

This resonates with Emily who feels that 'meaningful experiences' and 'purposeful learning' are important aspects of her practice and feature in the ranking of her values. This is evident in story one with 'Eddie' (Appendix One English video 00:09) (a child with cerebral palsy) as she ensures that he understands and makes links between the purposes of using the rolling pin, allowing Eddie to make meaning and understand the purpose of this activity. This is illustrated by the following reflection:

> My session with Eddie was a privilege to be part of. He is a really optimistic little boy, who has an amazing attitude to life and is inspiring to his friends and staff. Eddie's weakness in his hands does stop him from wanting to use both hands, and he

> will shy away from activities that require this, so to have him want to use the rolling pin was amazing.

This also links to other key priorities within the ranking of her values and reflections which include the importance of 'know[ing] the children' (in relation to their interests and how they learn) and 'reflecting from both staff and children'. This was also prevalent within the literature which highlighted that the knowledge, expertise and sensitivity required of early years practitioners cannot be overestimated if young children's learning in early childhood settings is to be maximised (Murray, 2018). It supports the view that young children are pre-programmed and have an innate psychological drive which involves teachers responding to them in a way that nurtures their eagerness to learn (Moyles *et al.,* 2014). Moreover, the literature revealed that pre-school teachers require sophisticated expertise to know when and how to intervene in young children's learning in early years settings. This is evidenced in the example of Emily and Eddie. Emily intervenes sensitively and clearly understands Eddie's abilities, nurturing his eagerness to learn.

Accordingly, Emily ranked 'skilled caring practitioners' as one of her values (not a ranking identified by the Swedish teacher). Astrid, however, did 'know the children' and was caring and empathetic in her conduct with the children and, like Emily, she was observed making sustained eye contact during conversations and getting down to the children's level. It is also apparent from Emily's reflections and the video footage, that she knows Eddie's individual needs. She knows from speaking to his parents and health professionals that the left side of his body is weaker and needs

strengthening. Emily ranked 'understanding child development and the expected stages', which was also a difference between the English and Swedish teachers' ranking of their values. This perhaps can be associated with the English teacher again having to know where children are developmentally so that she can plan for next steps, as set out in the EYFS (DfE, 2017) as well as the EYFS assessment profile (DfE, 2019). The EYFS (DfE, 2017) also states that the adult role within 'Positive Relationships' and 'Enabling Environments' affects both how and what a child learns. Emily reflects on her role in story one with Eddie and she feels that she dominated the session slightly, commenting that:

> When reflecting on the session, I do feel that I did a lot of talking, which makes me feel uncomfortable; did he have enough time to say what he needed to?

Emily also states:

> We have a huge amount of Special Educational Needs (SEN) children and we are always being advised by other professionals to use a 'commenting' approach when they are working. This enables them to be immersed in language and for them to make a connection between the action and its meaning.

In the English setting Emily is the Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator, so developing inclusive practices would be part of her role. She appears to be questioning her practice in the extract above, as she has been advised to use a commenting approach when children are working so that children can make the distinction between action and its meaning. This emphasises the importance and visibility of the teacher's role in the English pre-school

setting. It can be assumed from Emily's reflection that she is not fully comfortable in her interactions with Eddie and it leaves her thinking about her teaching approach. Bruner (2006) refers to 'folk pedagogy' and states that when observing any adult working with a child, it is striking to see how much of what they do is guided by what children's minds are like and how to help them learn, even though they may not be able to verbalise their pedagogical principles. This could be applied to the English teacher questioning her role and her values in this particular example. The links between actions and meaning are also stipulated by Piaget (1977), who believed that the construction of knowledge takes place through a process of assimilation and accommodation rather than simply receiving, unfiltered, the knowledge that is transmitted to children through their experiences and by society. Moreover, objects are embedded in the context of actions that serve to assimilate them to the fulfilment of intentions. Emily states:

> I wanted Eddie to make sense of what he was doing, to know why he was doing it and essentially for him to assess how it was going himself, so that he could modify his actions and better them if at all possible (I think by him modifying where he put his clay is a good example of this). It is about giving our children the tools to be able to think critically, so that next time they can do it independently with greater success.

The English teacher here talks about children being able to think critically and move to greater success independently. This again links to the view of Wood and Bruner (1988) and scaffolding, where eventually the teacher 'fades away'. This is evident in the example of Emily and Eddie in the English pre-school. The process of scaffolding is also observed in story three of the Swedish video footage (Appendix One 08:55), as Astrid comments:

> By being close and encouraging Joline, by asking questions and challenging her, I could create a moment of reflection. By this, she could succeed and she even wanted to continue the process, and we did. By letting her create things from her own idea with different materials, I want to show that her thoughts are important and also what she makes is important.

The process of scaffolding is perceived to have advantages over the direct transmission of knowledge in that it affirms responsibility for learning to be with the individual rather than the 'teacher'. It also offers greater sense of ownership of knowledge and suggests to the learner that the creation of knowledge is an ongoing active process (Wood, 1998). The term scaffolding relates to helping the child to solve problems by drawing attention to significant aspects of the problem (Wood and Bruner, 1988). Astrid can be seen scaffolding Joline, and Emily can also be seen scaffolding Eddie during story one. 'Scaffolding' featured in the ranking of the English teacher's values. In the English footage story one, the significant aspect of the problem was how to shape and modify the clay and the correct language to support this. In 'lending' Eddie a choice of tools to use to manipulate the clay, she asked him which one he thought would be most useful. Emily ranked 'problem solving' in her values, which was again a difference between the English and Swedish teachers' rankings. By 'problem solving,' Emily is referring to challenging children and encouraging the children to think. As Emily reflects:

> I like to give meaningful praise, not just to say good girl/boy. I want to develop our children's growth mind-set. I don't want them to think that they are limited by their intelligence, I want them to know that with the right tools their learning and success

> is limitless, nothing is unachievable. I reinforce their achievements by saying 'I like the way…' so they understand it is the process not the final result. As the session developed, I reinforced the process in which Eddie was working 'I like the way you put it closer.'

Here, the teacher talks about giving meaningful praise and developing the children's 'mindset' to encouraging them to problem solve. She also talks about children having no limits and with the right tools their learning and success is limitless. This suggests that the environment needs to have appropriate resources to support children's learning. She has a 'can do' approach, which is one of the learning dispositions advocated by Edgington (2004) which are optimal for children's learning. The English teacher also emphasises that children can keep going and re-evaluating, and that learning is a process and not the final result, using phrases like, 'I like the way you' (Appendix One English Pre-School 02:52).

The Swedish teacher also talks of challenging Joline and letting her reflect on the process. What this demonstrates in both examples is that the more teachers take an active role in scaffolding, modelling and questioning, problem solving and listening to children's ideas, the more cognitively challenging learning experiences the children will have. This in turn will enable professionals to gain an insight into children's theorising and thinking processes and how they learn.

6.5 Part One – Pedagogical Approaches

The literature on pedagogy and pedagogical approaches to the curriculum reveals many definitions of pedagogy. Some definitions focus on the 'how'

or ‘practice’ of educating, while others focus on the strategies that teachers use to provide knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions within a particular social and cultural context, and how this is facilitated. Other definitions focus on the interactive process between teacher and learner and the learning environment. A recent definition is based on praxis, which means an action based on theory underpinned by values (Johansson and Einarsdottir, 2018). In relation to the findings of this study, and reflecting on story one, ‘Eddie’ from the English setting, it could be argued that praxis reflects this example. Breaking this down further, Emily describes how her role – and thus her pedagogical approach – are different during forest school and that she is there to observe and support (actions). She then refers to the EYFS (DfE, 2017) ‘Characteristics of Effective Learning’ (influenced by theory) and how she enjoys forest school, as it is a time when she can see children doing things they do not normally do (beliefs). ‘Development Matters’ (DfE, 2012) suggests that adults should play with children and encourage them to explore, and that adults need to show an interest in discovering new things. It also advocates that adults pay attention to how children engage in activities and the challenges faced, the effort, thought, learning and enjoyment. Emily can be seen doing this during story one in the video footage, where she asks Eddie what he would like to make and talks him through the process of making the clay flat (Appendix One English Pre-School 00:10). She asks him how he feels now he has achieved what he wanted, flattening clay by using a board and a rolling pin. She also talks about textures and how the clay feels, using language such as ‘flat’ and ‘lumpy’ (Appendix One English-Pre School 00:30). Eddie was challenged by

this activity and achieved something which he can now arguably apply and use in different contexts. This links to the concept of the ZPD as advocated by Vygotsky (1987). Emily acknowledged Eddie's new learning and expresses this to Eddie at the end of story one. Emily's pedagogical approach with Eddie clearly links to the findings of Siraj-Blatchford (2003), which are that effective pedagogy includes the child as an active participant through adult-child involvement, cognitive co-construction, engagement and the use of instruction techniques such as modelling and demonstrating, explanation and questioning. All these pedagogical strategies can be seen in story one of the English video footage. When ranking her values in Stage two and reflecting on her practice through the video footage, 'modelling,' 'questioning' and 'extending learning' were all included. However, although Emily clearly feels that these are linked to her teaching priorities, they were all ranked towards the bottom of her values, suggesting that although these are important to her, they are not as high a priority as other aspects of her practice.

The pedagogical approach advocated in the EYFS in England encourages practitioners to adopt a played based approach to curricula and to follow children's interests, although the dominant discourse running through the documentation promotes play that is well planned, purposeful and potentially instructive. As the literature revealed, unlike Swedish teachers, English teachers are arguably challenged to meet adult determined goals from play, and at the same time engage children in meaningful and intrinsically motivating play activities. This dichotomy is reflected in Emily's reflection on

story four (Appendix One English Pre-School 14:38) which is entitled ‘Letters and Sounds Extension Group’:

> The letters and sounds are an extension group, they had only been attending it for a few weeks, but it is a special time for those children who need a specific push.

This again reflects a ‘next steps’ and ‘readiness approach’, and the dominant discourse through English early years pedagogy. The focus is on children’s literacy skills and as the literature suggested, this is given prominence in English settings, rather than valuing all areas of learning as being equal in terms of how children learn.

Contrastingly, the Swedish teacher, reflecting on her pedagogical approach states:

> In the morning, we gather to start the day together with a (short) welcoming of all the children that have arrived. We use photos of them to talk about those who are present and those that have not yet arrived.

This reflection by the Swedish teacher again mirrors the Swedish pre-school curriculum values and her pedagogical approach here locates children in the context of their families. It emphasises that care, socialisation and learning together form a coherent whole (Lpfö, 2010). The Swedish teacher used provocative questioning to generate discussion and dialogue between the children, and listened and responded to their ideas. She did, however, encourage the children to demonstrate and tell each other’s ideas. During the latter part of story one, Astrid reaffirms this and reflects:

> Then we look back together on things that we have done earlier, on days before. In the video, Sebastian had made a drawing of Kusama's houseboat. (Kusama is the Japanese artist that inspires us with patterns). Sebastian shows and explains to the other children what he has done and about his ideas of it. The other children can share their thoughts and reflections on the subject. The children then get a task, from the ideas of the group, to progress the work.

The influence of Reggio Emilia is evident here (the Swedish teacher had also recently visited pre-schools in Reggio Emilia). According to Cagliari *et al.* (2016, p.210), within a Reggio approach "the teacher should be understood as a co-constructor of knowledge but also as a researcher, experimenter and a new type intellectual, a producer of knowledge connected with the demands of society." Malaguzzi's view of the role of the adult was to construct pedagogy for individual children based on relations, listening and liberation. This can be observed in the reflection by the Swedish teacher in story two with the children listening to Sebastian and then using his ideas as a springboard to develop their own. The children could also choose whichever material or resources they wanted to create a 'houseboat'. Additionally, the Reggio pedagogical approach is about children and adults working together to construct knowledge (values and identities), making meaning, sharing and testing ideas in a dialogical relationship through the medium of open-ended project work. This is reflected in the Swedish pre-school website (2020), which highlights the benefits of open-ended project work. All of these aspects of a Reggio pedagogical approach can be observed in the Swedish video footage, especially during stories one and

two. Moreover, Malaguzzi provided a list of conditions which were the ingredients to support good pedagogical work and which include the provision of ateliers and atelieristas (the art workshops which were present in the Swedish setting). Malaguzzi also believed that a pre-school teacher must start with the question: What is our image of the child? Who do we think the child is? This is evident in the Swedish teacher's comment that she wants children to reflect on the process, as articulated by Sebastian, and use their own ideas. 'Project work' and 'reflect, review and evaluate' are the top two ranked values of the Swedish teacher and therefore are her teaching priorities, although in stories one and two only the 'reflect' aspect is observed. In her reflection during Stage two, the Swedish practitioner discusses:

> How they use the morning assembly as a platform for democracy, where the children have the possibility to be curious of each other, their different experiences and interests. By sharing their discoveries with each other, they get new ideas from the other children's knowledge and experiences. The children learn from each other by group collaborative learning. Each child contributes to the group and the group contributes to each child. Working with participation of the children requires a thorough planning, reflection and a strong collective idea. My role as a teacher is to plan, reflect and involve both colleagues and children in the activities.

What is evident here is a listening and reflective adult who values children's voice and children learning from each other. The Swedish teacher values what children say to her as well as building on their experiences, revisiting their work and evaluating this.

In relation to building on children's ideas, during story five of the English teacher's footage, Emily can be observed reading a 'big book', 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' to the children (Appendix One English-Pre-School 20:45). Emily, like Astrid, can be seen viewing children as active protagonists through the use of provocative questioning to assess their knowledge and understanding of the text. This is evident in this reflection, as Emily states:

> I like to make 'silly mistakes' and for the children to correct me, as it empowers them. By asking the children to use actions/act it involves most of the children.

'Empowered enthusiastic children' is also one of the rankings in Emily's values as she reaffirms:

> I think my role as a teacher is a privilege; I am there as a way of enhancing our children's learning, provoking.

The role play area has been turned into a bridge for the troll with several puppets and props linking to the story to help children make sense of their experiences.

The English teacher reflects on story five and states:

> Reading a core book for a series of weeks enables children to get a handle on the structure of the story. For them to think about the characters and setting and to take the story to the next level by making their own changes to it, or just to be able to join in with the repeated refrain, depending on where their next steps are.

The English teacher again refers to ‘next steps’. This is also referenced in ‘Development Matters’ (DfE, 2014b); it could be argued that there is too much focus on ‘next steps’ rather than where children ‘are at’ now. It suggests that the English teacher adopts a more directive pedagogical approach and the Swedish teacher adopts a less directive pedagogical approach. This is linked to Broadhead, Howard and Wood (2010), who refer to the ‘outside in’ and ‘transmission directive approach’ which sees the role of the pre-school teacher as transmitting knowledge and skills that are deemed valuable to children. Furthermore, OECD (2004), on comparing curricular traditions such as ‘readiness to school based learning’ and ‘social pedagogical traditions’, states that in ‘readiness to school based learning’ there is a focus on phonological awareness and letter recognition, in contrast to a social pedagogic tradition which encourages the ideas embedded in the ‘different perspectives’ featured in Astrid’s ranking of her values. This views children as being able to express themselves in a variety of ways and is reiterated by the Swedish teacher’s reflection during story two as she explains:

> Sebastian had made the drawing the day before and I asked if he wanted to share it with his friends. I had planned what material to offer based on Sebastian’s drawing, [they] got the opportunity to create what they thought Kusama’s house might look like by drawing in the atelier. We used pens to draw the designs and then they could use colour, if they wanted. The children worked with this task until they felt satisfied with their own drawing. More children joined to make drawings when there was space for them around the table.

Therefore, the pedagogical approach adopted by Astrid, according to Rinaldi (1993), requires the adult to have creativity, imagination and the

opportunities for learning within the pre-school setting, as can be seen in Astrid's approach in story one.

Similarly, the English teacher, reflecting on her practice in relation to story one, also values children's creativity and ability to express themselves:

> The activities that the children are involved in are usually enchanting and full of magic, taking them to a fantasy world, whilst still giving them a purpose for their work, e.g. making a fairy/elf home, magical potions to make a poorly witch better, to find new creatures etc. this bit of fantasy motivates our children to think carefully about what and how they are working.

She elaborates on this, saying:

> We try to incorporate the 'Characteristics of Learning' especially during forest school. Also, creativity in the early years.

It could be argued that the pedagogical approaches drawn upon require the pre-school teachers to know and understand the uniqueness of the children in the setting. They also involve having a focus and a shared dialogue with children and 'the locus of an ethical encounter' (Edmiston, 2008), which will allow pre-school teachers to view children's needs and how they can be supported and developed.

6.6 Part One – Rights of the Child

In relation to the rights of the child, Malaguzzi argued that policy, provision, practice, structure and culture should be backed up by professionals'

approaches and their image of the child (Moss, 2016). It could be argued that for this to be carried out in practice, it requires pre-school teachers to hold underpinning and 'implicit' values about how they view 'children' and 'childhood'. This is evident in stories one and two in the Swedish teacher's reflection, as she comments on the children learning from each other and being curious about each other's ideas. In Stage two, 'children's voice', 'valuing what children say' and 'listening' all feature in the Swedish teachers' ranking. Similarly, the English teacher also ranked 'rights of the child' and their 'voice.' This suggests that both teachers view children's rights as an important part of their practice, and that the learning environment, and the pedagogical approaches implemented, need to reflect this.

During Stages one and two, the Swedish teacher refers to her role as an adult as being to plan and reflect and to involve both colleagues and children in the planning and initiation of activities. This again reflects the social pedagogy tradition prominent in Nordic countries, where early years are seen as a broad preparation for life and the foundation stage of lifelong learning. It values children as active agents, and having a 'voice' in terms of the planning and preparing of activities within the pre-school setting. This is reiterated by OECD (2004, p.6), and the literature previously discussed, that in socio-pedagogy "there is a focus on the agency of the child, including respect for the child's natural learning strategies and the extensive use of listening, project work and documentation with young children". Social pedagogy also proposes that education and care are family oriented, and "rather than specifying any pre-defined knowledge, skills or attitudes that

children would require in everyday life, the central aim of social pedagogy has been to empower children as active citizens, so that they can act to change their own lives" (Sylva *et al.,* 2010, p.151). This can be observed in stories one and two of the Swedish video, as the teacher acts as a co-constructor and experimenter, listening attentively to each child around the table. Viewing children as active agents in their own learning, she only prompted and intervened when invited to do so by the children, for example, when they asked questions or sought comments and suggestions on their work. The children stayed at the table for as long as they liked with no restrictions on time, with the teacher and children researching their thoughts and ideas. The idea of teachers and children being 'researchers' is a feature of the Reggio Emilia philosophy. This resonates with Sandberg and Arlemalm-Hagser (2014), who also believe that the Swedish view of children frames them as individuals with competences and active experiences, interests, knowledge and skills that should be the starting point for everyday activities in early childhood settings. This is evident throughout the Swedish stories and reflections.

The Swedish setting is part of the 'BRIC' (2019) project which aims to exchange aspects of 'good practice' between pre-school teachers in three countries (Italy, Sweden and the UK). BRIC research involved systematic education and training regarding democratic engagement in public spaces. The Swedish pre-school setting was involved in promoting democratic engagement in public spaces to look at different ways to make children more

‘visible’ there, and to demonstrate how they can be included as competent agents. This is supported by Astrid, reflecting on story seven:

> The last picture, of Millie behind the camera, really communicates our idea of pre-school – with the children as protagonists. The kind of pre-school we try to practice every day is about learning together in a democratic way – with the voices and the gazes of both children, teachers, families and society.

This recalls the views of Dewey (1938) who believed that children were the “chief carriers of control” (Dewey, 1938, p.40). Ideologically, the aim of education, according to Dewey (1938), was the creation of power and self-control. This is the case in story seven as Millie interrupted the researcher’s filming and directed me to give him the camera. This was ‘out of character’ for Millie, according to the teacher; he had been upset most of the afternoon as he did not want to go outside. The Swedish teacher was pleased that Millie had found the confidence and self-belief to ask for the camera, and pleased to see his self-esteem grow. The researcher during story seven (Appendix One Swedish Pre-School 19:00) stimulated and promoted Millie to come outside and encouraged him to play with the camera. In Stage two Astrid rates ‘public spaces for learning’ and ‘being part of community/society’ in her values. This could have perhaps been influenced by her pre-school setting’s involvement in the BRIC (2019) project but also, being part of a community and society is the fundamental drive behind the Swedish pre-school curriculum (Lpfö, 2010). The Swedish teacher’s values reflect the idea of children’s voices, as she includes ‘public spaces for learning’ and

‘part of community/society’, which signals a difference in relation to the values of the English teacher.

In addition, there is further evidence of the ‘rights of the child’ during story three of the Swedish video footage (Appendix One Swedish Pre-School 08:52). Joline wanted to make her drawing on plastic (a technique that had been introduced to the children earlier) and see her drawing magnified on the wall, using the overhead projector. Joline helped Astrid with the preparations in the large atelier, and these ideas and suggestions were again led by the child. Astrid and Joline talked about different concepts and solutions that appeared during the process, and Astrid says:

> My idea as a teacher is to encourage the different experiences and knowledge of the children to be shared in the group. I sat down together with them, to be able to listen to their thoughts and reflections. My purpose was to listen to what they need so I can be able to challenge them in their learning process, to be able to offer materials they might need. My aim is to give suggestions but also to encourage the dialogues between the children. In this situation I used pen and paper to document the ideas of the children.

This again reflects a Reggio philosophy, as Malaguzzi believed that schools were living centres of an open and democratic culture, enriched and informed by social encounters. Looking at this further, for Malaguzzi, democracy was not just about social management but also about participatory accountability. This is underpinned by the views of Dewey (1897) on ‘modes of associated living’. This pedagogy (like that in Reggio Emilia) is also about children and adults working together to construct knowledge (values and identities), making meaning and sharing and testing

ideas in a dialogical relationship. This includes the medium of open-ended project work (as in the case of the Swedish stories one, two and three). In story three, for example, Astrid takes the project work to an individual level by listening and responding to the requests of Joline. Joline wants to refine her work and magnify it to evaluate her drawing and take the next steps in her own learning, linked to her ideas and creativity. The task proceeded for at least 20 minutes, with Joline leading throughout and Astrid offering support and suggestions. There is further evidence that the Swedish teacher views the child as 'rich' and competent, which is again linked to Dewey (1897) in relation to seeing the children's cultures and also their futures "through social intercourse and conversation" (Dewey, 1897, p.77). This is visible in story five (Appendix One Swedish Pre-School 17:10) with Daris 'At the Construction Area':

> Daris has previously made constructions here, in the context of the project. He is now telling me about his ideas and is showing me how he made his construction. I am documenting, with pen, paper and camera to be able to remember, come back to, remind and refer to this narrative – both with Daris and in our collective project documentation.

The Swedish teacher ranked 'linking competences of children' which was a difference between the teachers' values.

The English pre-school teacher, during story two (Appendix One English Pre-School 03:11), 'Clay around the Table', provided the children with the opportunity to work with clay using a variety of tools and resources; this is similar to story two from the Swedish video footage 'In the Atelier' (Appendix

One Swedish Pre-School 03:45). There is no focus for this activity and this was one of the several activities within the English setting where the children were 'free' to go and choose what to do. The children during 'Clay at the Table' used different materials and resources and could come and go as they pleased; there was no time limit on this particular activity. The English teacher spoke to the group and individual children and asked them open ended questions about their work. This is also emphasised in Stage two when reflecting on her values, as she states that:

> I like to follow a child-centred approach and supply endless open-ended activities, where more than one area of learning can occur. Just having the round table invites talking and interaction between the children. It is hard to decide how much adult interaction is necessary, and when to take a step back, and I am not sure that I have got the balance right all the time during this clip.

This is reflected in the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2017) in England where it is advocated that a child-centred approach with a mix of pedagogical practices is to be adopted by early years practitioners. Research by the DfE (2017) concludes that a reflection for England is the importance of maintaining a child-centred and developmentally appropriate approach while adapting practices to cater for an increasingly diverse population. Rose and Rogers (2012, p.6) claim that child-centred provision views the child as "curious and capable, respecting children's rights as well as their needs and interests, and a commitment to active learning and free play." This is echoed in the Developmentally Appropriate Practice teaching perspective (NAEYC, 2009). It could be argued that it is evident in the English teacher's example

above, although she does acknowledge that perhaps she needs to give children more space and time for their voices to be heard authentically. This suggests that her values are for the child's voice to be at the centre of her practice, but the environment she is in makes this challenging in terms of meeting the setting and curricular demands. She does however value the time for such interactions with the children and between the children.

Key points from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989, 1992) are that children are viewed as active, engaged participants in their lives and in society. Children should have rights of agency; rights to take part in family decisions; rights to make decisions about their future and not be obliged to do what parents want them to do; and rights to their own opinions. The English pre-school is a 'Rights Respecting School' in accordance with the UNCRC (1989). The English setting's policy also states that the setting has taken part in a UNICEF programme that aims to put children's rights at the heart of school's work:

> The aim is to embed children's rights in our school ethos and culture to improve well-being and develop every child's talents and abilities to their full potential. We aim to develop children's awareness of their rights, and develop their awareness of the rights of others, helping them to become 'global citizens'.
>
> (English pre-school website, 2020)

The ethos of the English setting involves practitioners listening to children and children showing respect for each other and for adults. The pre-school policy also states that children contribute to planning their learning and learn

about their rights at home with a ‘Rights Respecting Teddy’. The setting states that it uses the ‘language of rights’ in everyday situations. An example of this is: ‘You have the right to a drink of water’, ‘You have the right to choose what you play with’, ‘You have the right to learn’. “We encourage children to reflect on how their behaviour affects those around them, which allows us to build and maintain a positive and safe learning environment for all” (English pre-school website, 2020).

Both teachers value the voice and the rights of the child and plan activities and the environment based on the needs of the children. The teachers also reflect this in terms of their role, mutual respect for children, and the fact that both their pre-school settings are places for democracy and freedom through sustained and intimate relationships.

6.7 Part One – Relationships

The literature review revealed that an effective pre-school setting includes an environment which provides opportunities for children to develop socially. This includes a play-based environment where children can form relationships with their peers and also with adults. The theme of ‘relationships’ was an area where there were similarities between the teachers’ ranking of values. They both ranked ‘parent relationships’, ‘bringing home into school’ and ‘peer learning’ as of high significance.

Story four ‘Lunchtime’ (Appendix One Swedish Pre-School 14:55) in the Swedish pre-school setting shows how relationships with the children were nurtured:

> We sit down together with the children and have lunch together with them. We pass on the food to everyone and we talk together about the food, the tastes and any topics that might come up from the children or the teacher. We want lunchtime to be a nice moment of being together and I am, like in the other situations, not the central figure of the conversations. I support the children to help each other, communicate and I also take part in the conversation but always with the children as protagonists.

At the end of Stage two, the English teacher offers a similar reflection in relation to nurturing and developing children’s conversations by acting as a protagonist:

> I think my role as a teacher is a privilege; I am there as a way of enhancing our children’s learning, provoking.

Emily, the English teacher also sits with the children at lunchtime to develop relationships and ‘get to know’ the children as well as also having key worker groupings. However, this was not included in the final video footage. The two teachers believed that developing relationships helped to bridge the link between pre-school and home. During story four, the Swedish teacher, Astrid, is seen responding and intervening as appropriate in the children’s conversations through a shared ethical conduct and through having conversations about the children’s favourite colours and what they like to do at home. This is linked to the Swedish pre-school curriculum (Lpfö, 2010) which actually tells pre-school teachers to develop the child’s sense of

empathy and concern for others, as well as an openness and respect for differences in people's views and ways of life: "The child's need to reflect on and share their thoughts with others in various ways about questions of life should be supported" (Lpfö, 2010, p.3).

Astrid encouraged the children to listen and respond to each other's conversations which were all about the individual children and their home interests and experiences. Further examples include: what time they went to bed, how their mum is after her operation, and how a new baby sister is. The idea of bringing 'home into school' is also visible during story one. In the Swedish setting, as shown in this 'story', 'Morning Assembly' (Appendix One Swedish Pre-School 00:08), they start the day by looking through photographs of each child and talking about each other's ideas, including children who are not in pre-school that day. According to the Swedish curriculum (Lpfö, 2010, p.7), "The pre-school should take into account and develop children's ability to take responsibility and develop their social preparedness so that solidarity and tolerance are established at an early stage." The pre-school "should encourage and strengthen the child's compassion and empathy for the situations of others" (Lpfö, 2017, p.7). This is evident in stories four and one in the Swedish setting video footage which use dialogue with children and between children to talk about feelings – their own or those of others.

In relation to the English context, the EYFS (DfE, 2017, p.8) advocates that "children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own

and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable." Additionally, children are being encouraged to "make relationships with other children, play co-operatively, taking turns with others" (DfE, 2017, p, 8). It also stipulates that children should "take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They [should] show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings and form positive relationships with adults and other children" (DfE, 2017, p, 8). This again reflects a need to foster compassion and empathy for others.

Vygotsky (1978, p.57) believed that "social relations or relations among people genetically underline all higher functions and their relationships." He further argued that, through social interactions between the growing child and other members of the community, the child gains the 'tools' of thinking and learning. Likewise, the English teacher reflects during Stage two that:

> I went to a philosophy for children seminar a while ago, and he explained that children need to understand the process of thinking, and to understand what we are asking them to do when we ask them to think.

Emily's reflection reveals how the learning from the conference has arguably transformed her practice:

> He suggested that we tell our children that our brain is a muscle, and I like the idea that they know that they can exercise it, and make it stronger. The session where the girls were explaining what they had been learning about/doing that day (during story four) was fantastic for 2 reasons:
>
> 1. It highlighted their gaps in understanding the level of detail they need to use when explaining them (It was therefore great

> the way they supported each other and shared their learning experience).
> 2. It also worked great as a way of them promoting the activities outside to their friends, which is more effective than an adult suggesting that they explore a new activity. Later that day other friends copied what they had been doing.

This links to Bruce (2015) and Garvey (1990) who also believe that play can tell us many things about children, including about relationships on many levels – between the children themselves, with adults at home, and their communicative and social competencies – and also how they think, learn and feel. Additionally, the English setting website (2020) reiterates through their play policy that there is a free-flow system during play, where children can choose to play inside or outside, enabling children to be physically active, follow their own interests, make decisions, form positive relationships and learn from each other. There is also substantial evidence that, through play, "children demonstrate improved verbal communication, high levels of social and interaction skills, creative use of play materials, imaginative and divergent thinking skills and problem-solving capabilities" (Anning et al., 2009, p.27). This is evident in the examples from the Swedish and English settings previously discussed.

Emily, the English teacher, reflects on how children can learn from each other through play in relation to story two:

> The clay table is great to promote problem solving and sharing. I used differentiated questioning to HA children, and then I repeat back the words, extending what they say. Children learn well through their peers. Riley modelled how to make the print in the clay to Leah and I think she listened better to him than she would from me, and it also boosts Riley's self-confidence.

In agreement, Vygotsky (1978) believed that peer collaboration was more effective when working with a more expert peer. A central theme of both Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories is the importance of asymmetric relationships which support the transfer of knowledge from a more knowledgeable peer or adult to a less experienced learner. This was evident in story three in the English footage (Appendix One English Pre-School 11:46) 'Thinking and Reflecting Time', where the children reflected on their play activities and learning from the 'free play' session. The teacher engaged in dialogue with the children, asked questions and also challenged them by asking, 'What if...?' Other children joined in and offered suggestions. Bandura (1977) believed that social factors were central to children's development and learning and that social behaviours can be learnt by observing others. This can be seen throughout both teachers' video 'stories'. Bertram and Pascal (2002, p.246) identify three core elements of effective learners which include "dispositions to learn, social competence and self-concept, and social and emotional wellbeing". They also reiterate that teachers are responsible for establishing sustaining relationship with others; they endeavour to stimulate relationship competencies through creating activities and implementing strategies that require turn taking, sharing, helping others and more.

Both teachers value the relationships the children have with adults and their peers, and both teachers act as protagonists to encourage children to communicate. However, the Swedish teacher can be seen letting children

'use' their peers in a holistic way in terms of communicating socially, and she 'steps back' to allow this to happen; this is an underpinning factor in her pedagogical approach and could be related to an activity, or to their thoughts, about themselves and other children personally in pre-school and at home. Emily also values children learning from peers, but this is generally linked to improving children's knowledge and learning in a certain area of development, and in many examples it is 'controlled' by the teacher. It could be argued that this is linked to 'next steps' in children's development and the use of more able peers to promote academic ability. In comparison, Astrid uses peer learning in a more sociable way, in terms of sharing interests and ideas, so that it is more of a social process between children in relation to their families and cultures.

6.8 Part One – Learning Environment

When reflecting on her practice and her values in Stages one and two, relating to the outdoor environment, Emily (the English teacher) says:

> I love forest school, as it is a time when I see our children trying things that they don't always choose to do. We do it as a key group and it is led by another adult, so I am there as a different role for my children. It is a time that I can sit back and observe and support my children in a way that I can't if I am leading the session.

This is an interesting point, as Emily clearly sees her role with the children in the indoor environment as predominantly 'leading', and she enjoys forest school time (which is led by another teacher) where she sees her role changing to observing and facilitating. This is supported by several pieces of

research in relation to how the term pedagogy is understood and implemented across different countries – for example, how English pedagogy is largely used to refer to the science of education and learning. Edwards (2000, in Cameron, 2006, p.9) notes, “It is about teachers being able to make informed interpretations of learners’ knowledge and environments in order to manipulate environments … which helps learners make sense of the knowledge available to them.” It could be said that this reflects the pedagogical approach adopted by Emily in the outdoor environment. For example, in story one with Eddie, she uses an opportunity during forest school time to be an observer and to work with Eddie using the tools of the environment (in this case a rolling pin) to enable Eddie to have first-hand experiences of using clay and the left side of his body. Emily is clearly doing this with Eddie as she is aware that the left side of his body needs strengthening, because of her previous experiences with him. In relation to the learning experiences offered in the outdoor environment, the English teacher states how she enjoys seeing the children engaging in activities which they perhaps would not normally choose to do. Thomas and Harding (in White, 2014) said much the same, in that the outdoor environment should offer children opportunities for all areas of development, compared to the built indoor environment.

Similarly, Ouvry (2003) suggests that the role of the adult in the outdoor environment should be as active as that in the indoor environment. Siraj-Blatchford (2004) says that adults are role models for children and therefore have the power to influence values, attitudes and behaviour. It could be

argued that Emily is engaging Eddie in the outdoor forest school activity and is modelling how he can be creative. She is also developing his imagination and therefore modelling attitudes and behaviour, as well as her beliefs and values concerning the benefits of outdoor play. Eddie focuses on the activity for a sustained period of time, which is an element of the characteristics of effective learning within the EYFS (DfE, 2017), and specifically, active learning that involves concentrating, being persistent when children encounter difficulties, and enjoying their achievements (DfE, 2017). The EYFS (DfE, 2017, p.30) also emphasises the importance of the outdoor environment, and that children from birth to five should be accessing it on a daily basis.

Likewise, the Swedish Pre-School Curriculum (Lpfö, 2010) says that time spent outdoors should provide opportunities for play and other activities, in both planned and natural environments. The Swedish setting website (2020) policy talks about the outdoor environment being based around children's chances to meet and learn together in different areas through a variety of activities. It says that the learning and pedagogical environments inside should be reflected outside, including in project work (Swedish Pre-School 2020). Linking to this, although the Swedish teacher was very keen to be filmed outdoors, consent was not given for some children to be part of the study, and filming became problematic. She did, however, spend at least two hours a day outside (each day between 12 and 2); she supported the interests of individual children and groups of children and provided resources for their own development, which is linked to using the environment to

empower children to formulate their own ideas and choices (Cameron, 2006). For example, there was one field observation, where the children were interested in siphoning water away from puddles. Astrid proceeded to get out several pipes from the resources shed and demonstrated how they could do this for themselves. The children were free to explore the outdoor environment with their peers with no planned structure during my visit, which had a focus on the child's social development and co-operation with others. The Swedish pre-school uses the local environment and the forest as an outdoor learning environment; these contrast with the English setting, where the forest school session was part of a series of planned sessions which, arguably, had adult-led outcomes. This has been criticised by Ford and Davenport (2019) who say that the term 'forest school' has been misconstrued by some early years settings in England. They think that the focus should be on the children being guided by their own curiosity rather than lessons planned by a teacher, as was the case in the English setting. I did, however, observe the outdoor environment being used in the English setting as part of a free flow of activities without a planned focus, where children were encouraged to use their imagination and be creative. Both pre-schools also had 'wild' environments for the children to explore in which children could experience the different aspects of nature through risk taking, investigation and exploring, according to their own interests.

It appears that both the Swedish and English settings value the outdoor environment, and both teachers reflected on this in Stages one and two.

They also declared the ‘outdoors’ to be one of their values, suggesting that it is something they feel is of worth and importance in their practice.

However, it could be argued that the English and Swedish teachers’ roles in the outdoor environment are different, and that they use a combination of approaches. It is interesting that in the English pre-school setting, there is a clear focus on the role of the adult in the outdoor environment, as the practitioner leading the session was employed as a forest school leader. Likewise, in the context of an English pre-school setting, Emily is aware of the EYFS (DfE, 2017) which advocates planning of outdoor activities. The focus of the forest school session was on building on the previous week’s session, and this was used as a starting point for the focus of the activity. This is reflected in the setting’s teaching and learning policy which includes an emphasis on planned play outdoors:

> We value learning outdoors, and believe that being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and on their development. We plan for learning outdoors across the curriculum and children have access to the outdoor learning environment throughout the day. All children take part in Forest School sessions every fortnight, developing self-regulation, risk management, and an understanding of the natural world.
>
> (English pre-school website, 2020)

Subsequently, the Swedish teacher spoke of bringing the children’s project work into the outdoor environment and building on it with the children. This features prominently in the Reggio Emilia approach which promotes the idea of project work being part of the outdoor and indoor environment (Gandini,

1993). Arguably, the English pre-school teacher provided more structured activities and spent more time with the children in terms of questioning and physically interacting. The Swedish pre-school teacher observed, reflected and 'stepped in' with a stronger emphasis on 'here and now', to provide additional resources and support the children when she deemed this to be appropriate. Astrid ranked 'spontaneity' as one of her values, which links to the idea that she responds to the children's needs and interests. Astrid was arguably less 'visible' in terms of physical interaction with the children. The children were 'grouped' in terms of their ideas and were encouraged to work out problems and learn from each other.

In summary, the English and Swedish pre-school outdoor environments afford opportunities for children to access interesting and stimulating outdoor spaces with a wide range of different activities, each with distinct purposes, whether planned or unplanned (Waite, Davis and Brown, 2006). What this suggests is that, in English pre-school settings, an outdoor pedagogy is becoming more explicit and clearly framed but, arguably, it involves a more outcomes driven school readiness orientation.

In relation to the learning environment indoors, it was observed that the English and Swedish pre-school settings' indoor environments looked very similar. Both environments had wooden furniture, natural materials (which were on the Swedish teachers' ranking of her values) and different areas and spaces for learning. They also had a variety of accessible resources to stimulate the children's interests. When ranking their values, the English and

Swedish teachers both included: ‘a stimulating environment’, ‘different areas’, ‘variety of resources’ and ‘well resourced, accessible and provoking environment’. Both teachers therefore ranked the learning environment as an important aspect of their practice and emphasised the importance of a wide range of stimulating resources. They also agreed that the pre-school setting needs to have different spaces and areas of learning which motivate children’s interests and eagerness to learn. There were also other similarities in relation to the Swedish and English teachers’ ranking of values connected to the learning environment. For example, Emily ranked a ‘child’s level of involvement’ and Astrid similarly ranked children being ‘engaged’ as one of her values. These are interpreted as having the same meaning and suggest that both teachers see children being focussed for a sustained period of time as an important part of their learning. The DfE (2017, p.2) talks of “enabling environments” as one of its themes: “Children will become more deeply involved when you provide something that is new and unusual for them to explore, especially when it is linked to their interests.” Likewise, OECD (2012) concludes that it is teachers’ ability to create a high-quality pedagogic environment that makes the difference for children, and this is linked to creating sustained and more sensitive interactions. The English teacher ranked a ‘free flow environment’ as one of her values and the Swedish teacher alludes to it also. From observations, the Swedish pre-school setting encouraged children to explore different areas and aspects of learning, and provided an environment where children could choose and move between activities. According to Lpfö (2018, p.7), “Pre-school should

be a vibrant social community that provides security and creates a will and a desire to learn."

Additionally, Claxton and Carr (2004, in Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.126) identify four types of environment that adults can create for young children: 'a prohibiting environment', 'an affording environment', 'an inviting environment' and 'a potentiating environment'. It could be argued that the Swedish and English teachers use a combination of all these types of environments during the 20-minute video footage; however some are less prevalent than others. For example, the English learning environment may be described as slightly 'prohibiting' in the sense that there was a time scale attached to the daily activities and a routine of planned activities for each day of the week. The Swedish setting also had some set times and routines of the day, for example the time children went outside and when lunch was to be served, but the rest of the day can be described as offering a more 'affording,' learning environment. This is where children have the freedom to play with a wide range of resources but with little adult involvement. The English learning environment, however, did demonstrate some aspects of 'an affording' learning environment, and Emily prioritised 'free flow play' as one of her ranked values. It could be suggested that both pre-school settings offer 'an inviting' learning environment, where adults engage in meaningful conversations with children, for example in relation to how they are feeling. This is observable during various episodes in the teachers' 'stories'. In terms of 'a potentiating environment', it was clearly more dominant in the English pre-school teacher's video footage, where there is frequent participation and

shared activity between teachers and learners. The features of ‘a potentiating environment’ can be seen on a much lesser scale within the Swedish teacher’s video footage. Thus, it could be argued that there are differences between Emily and Astrid in terms of the roles that they adopt in the indoor learning environment, and these will be examined in the next part of the findings.

Part 2-Stage Three – Interpersonal Plane/Lifeworld

6.9 Introduction to Part Two

Part one involved an analysis of the values of each individual pre-school teacher using five key themes derived from the data. In part two, which includes Stages three and four, the 'interpersonal plane', 'lifeworld' and 'system and society' will be addressed. This part of the findings offers a more comparative perspective where the impact of social, cultural and political influences and policy in pre-school provision are highlighted. More specifically, Stage three is where the English and Swedish pre-school teachers watched each other's videos and, as the footage played, provided a commentary, using prompts from the researcher. These were offered to create a provocation which is a key element of polyvocal ethnography. The teachers provided a written reflection on each other's practice, and these have been analysed collectively and compared for Stage three. Thus, part two will be split into two sections: Stage three and Stage four. Stage three (interpersonal plane/lifeworld) will explore how the beliefs of teachers concerning curricula are put into practice at a setting and community level. The five themes used in part one will also be the themes for Stage three.

6.10 Part Two – How Children Learn

In relation to how children learn, during the video 'stories' a play-based learning environment can be seen in the English and Swedish pre-schools. The English teacher ranked 'learning through play' second in her values, which demonstrates that this is a high priority in relation to her practice. The Swedish teacher did not rank play in her values, but arguably a play-based

environment is an underpinning feature of her practice, as is evident in her video stories and observations. Anning *et al.* (2009), Wood and Attfield (2005) and Taylor and Woods (2005) all highlight the benefits of play in promoting children's learning and development. Garvey (1990) also believes that play can tell us many things about children, including about relationships between the children themselves, or with adults at home, and about their communicative and social competencies – how they think, learn and feel. Garvey (1990) says it can therefore be assumed that much of what children do within the pre-school setting is play. The Swedish Pre-School Curriculum (Lpfö, 2010) values the benefits of play and states that children should learn in a secure environment which challenges them and encourages play and activity. Additionally, the EYFS (DfE, 2017) in England supports the significance of play, saying that each area of learning must be implemented through play, as well as it being essential for children's development. While stated values may emphasise the importance of play, how these values are reflected in practice is a contentious subject. Although the early years curricula in both Sweden and England, like the teachers in this study, value the importance of play, the literature offers extensive evidence on learning through play, but much less on teaching through play (Anning et al., 2009). There is a dilemma in balancing learning and teaching through play in a more structured environment in the English pre-school. For example, a study by Bennett, Wood and Rogers (1997) found teachers generally reluctant to engage in children's play, and there was an expectation that children will demonstrate independence and autonomy in their play. When asking the English teacher to reflect in more depth on one of her video

stories for the purpose of presenting at a national conference with the researcher (British Early Childhood Education Research Association (BECERA), 2018), Emily chose story one, ‘Eddie’, to be the focus of her whole setting practice reflection. Emily refers to trying to understand the processes that children go through while engaged in play, and says:

> Forest school is embedded in the ethos of our school, and promotes our strong belief in children’s right to play, to be able to access outdoors, and to explore their environment taking calculated risks, building resilience and developing their self-regulation skills. It has a strong focus on the processes of learning and trying to develop our children’s growth mind set and characteristics of learning. Forest school is an opportunity for me to see my children engaging in new experiences, which aren’t always within their comfort zone.

Within this quotation, several of her values are mentioned. These include: ‘characteristics of effective learning’, ‘outdoors’ and ‘forest schools’, ‘rights of the child’, ‘learning through play’, the ‘development of children’s personal social and emotional development’, ‘time to think’ and ‘reflection from both staff and children’. The English teacher clearly values play as a teaching tool to enhance children’s learning, and this is embedded in her daily pedagogical practices. It is also valued by the English pre-school setting and is part of its underpinning ethos. This is evidenced by the setting’s own ‘play policy’ as well as by one of its overall aims, which states:

> We believe that children learn best by actively pursuing their interests and ideas through exploratory play, supported by teaching staff who extend their learning, facilitating the child's process of creating and developing theories about the world.

(English pre-school website, 2020)

It is feasible to conclude that Emily's whole approach, in line with the English pre-school website (2020), values teaching through play rather than learning through play – the latter mentions the role of teaching staff in facilitating and extending children's learning. This is reflected in Emily's statement which talks about children's 'mind-set' growing through play, and that her role is to explore the processes behind children's learning. The English teacher believes that children develop their resilience and social and emotional development through play. The English setting policy advocates that adults follow children's interests and ideas. This is consistent with the thinking of Rogers (2010) who believes that play is generally seen as based on the child's interests, whereas pedagogy is seen as the adult's role in providing an environment and strategies that support the process of teaching and learning. The English teacher's practice and values are reflective of Rogers (2010, p.41) 'new pedagogy of play' recommendations, and in particular of an "increased focus on the interactive roles of adults, as they engage with children to co-construct knowledge, promote challenge and support play that is both socially and conceptually complex".

Linking to how children learn in relation to the Swedish pre-school teacher, Astrid provided a whole setting ethos which valued play as a tool for children's learning. She engaged with children during their play by interacting and co-constructing knowledge and following their interests and

ideas. This is a feature of the Swedish pre-school website's (2020) welcome page, which states:

> In a playful way, we take advantage of the children's curiosity and desire to learn. The children's interests, opinions and needs influence how we plan the education.
>
> (Swedish pre-school website, 2020)

Rogers' 'new pedagogy of play' (2010, p.41) is evident in the Swedish teacher's whole setting approach, as she discloses that:

> There should be opportunities for teachers to reflect on their pedagogies of play, to problematize play and other pedagogies and to engage in in-depth professional dialogue about play.

This is visible in the Swedish teacher's practice as she engages in frequent dialogue with the setting's 'pedagogista' and other pre-school teachers, both in the setting and in the community. The Swedish pre-school website (2020) states:

> We work in a learning organization, which means that the teachers regularly meet in networks of different kinds for reflection, inspiration, evaluation and development. We have preschool teachers and nurses who work in teams. Everyone has different areas of interest that help create diversity in environments and operations.
>
> (Swedish pre-school website, 2020)

This suggests that Astrid engages in what Habermas (1987) terms 'lifeworld', which is the "background environment of competences, practices and attitudes representable, in terms of one's professional cognitive horizon" (Habermas, 1987, p.123); this links to the Swedish teacher sharing her reflections and ideas as part of a learning organisation. Therefore, in summary, the Swedish pre-school setting not only emphasises and promotes how children learn but also how teachers learn.

The English teacher, too, is part of a large group of nursery schools in Birmingham. These have formed an alliance, although she did not refer to this during the data collection process for this investigation. This is significant, as it demonstrates that the Swedish teacher collaborates with other professionals, but this was valued less highly by the English teacher.

For the purpose of her international conference presentation (EECERA, 2018), Astrid chose part of story one and story three to offer more insightful reflections and comments on her whole setting practice:

> By letting her [Joline] create things from her own idea with different materials, I want to show that her thoughts are important and also what she makes is important.

This implies that the Swedish teacher in this example values the children's 'independence', 'materials being used in different ways' and 'creativity', which were all featured in the ranking of her values. She then reflects more deeply on the footage:

> The children that were inspired by Sebastian's drawing, got the opportunity to create what they thought Kusama's house might look like, by drawing in the atelier. We used pens to draw the designs and then they could use colour, if they wanted. The children worked with this task until they felt satisfied with their own drawing. More children joined to make drawings when there was space for them around the table.

This reflection also considers how the role of the adult is there to provoke and suggest different ideas, as well as nurturing and encouraging relationships while children work collaboratively together. This is evident in the Swedish pre-school website's (2020) aims which state that:

> The educational environment and the varied material the children are offered should give the children the opportunity to play, explore and learn.

One aspect of 'a new pedagogy of play' is that pre-school teachers are required to have "comprehensive and sophisticated understandings of play grounded in research as well as practice that reflect the relevant social and cultural contexts" (Rogers, 2010 p.44). This resonates with Astrid and her whole setting practice reflection.

In relation to how children learn from a pre-school setting and community perspective, both teachers value play in developing children's learning, as well as providing opportunities for one-to-one communication and dialogue with children so that they can get to know their interests, needs and thought processes. This is evident in both of the teachers' chosen video footages where they are nurturing children's independence and creativity and offering

resources for them to fulfil their desires. However, when looking at both pre-school settings' overall aims, there is a significant difference in the adults' roles. The English setting's aims refer to teaching staff facilitating and extending children's learning, whereas the Swedish setting's aims focus on children's influence over their own learning. The Swedish pre-school website (2020) says:

> In Northern Hisingen [the province in which the Swedish pre-school is situated] we work with preschool as a place for democracy and participation. All preschools aim to work with project-oriented and educational documentation in order to increase children's influence over their learning.
>
> (Swedish pre-school website, 2020)

This illustrates a difference in focus in relation to how children learn. It is primarily connected with the role of the adult and the pedagogical approaches applied, which will now be explored.

6.11 Part Two – Pedagogical Approaches

In evaluating the findings in relation to the two teachers' whole setting pedagogical approaches, the thinking of Bernstein (2000) can be applied, in particular his ideas regarding pedagogic practices and cultural reproduction. This is evident when the English teacher reflects on the Swedish teacher's video:

> I know that on the video I talked a lot, especially in comparison to Astrid (the Swedish teacher).

She then says:

> I don't usually talk as much as I did on the video, I was definitely nervous.

Reflecting on her practice as a whole, she says:

> I have however, changed the way I teach, and I talk even less giving the children I teach greater opportunity to talk. I am confident in leaving bigger pauses and allowing for children to process for longer.

According to Bernstein (2000), what is missing from the English teacher's reflection is the inner logic of pedagogic discourse and its practices. He argues that understanding and shaping our practice involves investigating the forms of communication which bring values and beliefs to the surface. However, after watching the Swedish video further, it could be argued that the English teacher does start to bring her values more to the surface as she engages in a conversation regarding her pedagogical discourse. She has now changed her practice and has become more of a 'listening practitioner'. The fact of her values being articulated and brought to the surface further is evident, as she critically reflects that:

> During the past few years, I have struggled to find the balance between 'good sitting' during group sessions and the children's rights to be heard and comfortable. It was interesting to see how flexible Astrid was to the wriggling of the children. Watching the video showed that despite some of the children wriggling; they were all engaged in the session. I think sometimes when you lead the session, it does not always feel that all children are engaged, but that is because they show this in different ways. Some of this I think is to do with their abilities and immaturities.

This suggests that she feels reassured by the children moving about in the Swedish video footage, as this happens in her pre-school class. Perhaps this view is shaped again by stronger constructivist and readiness discourses in England which presume children are only 'listening' if they sit attentively still. Swedish philosophy, as discussed previously, values a more active and democratic approach through children having an active voice and control over their own learning. Emily was also surprised that Astrid started the day in a structured manner:

> I was interested to see that Astrid also has a 'structure' to her welcome time, sitting in a circle, using the photographs of their friends to promote discussions, and having a 'rap' they all sing together.

However, although it appears to be a structured whole class activity led by the teacher, the underpinning ethos behind it was one of valuing the children in relation to their family and community and 'bringing home into school'. It was aimed at the children sharing compassion and empathy for each other through the use of children's photographs as a stimulus. This was a high-ranking value for the Swedish teacher.

After watching the English video, Astrid questions whether she needs to be more of a leader. When she watched her video footage back (story one in particular), she saw herself 'sit back' and let the teaching assistants and children lead the session. Similarly, Emily questions whether Astrid misses some opportunities to engage in meaningful and deep conversations with the

children using pedagogical practices such as scaffolding, open ended questioning and co-construction.

Interestingly, the English teachers' unedited video footage was six hours long whereas the Swedish teachers' unedited video footage was only two hours long (as explained on page 174). The researcher tracked and focussed only on the two teachers while videoing, so it is evident that the Swedish teacher spent less 'physical time' with the children. However, this does not mean that the Swedish teacher provided fewer learning experiences, but again it reflects the view that Astrid's values differ in relation to the role of the adult compared to Emily's. This is evident from Astrid's comments:

> My idea as a teacher is to encourage the different experiences and knowledge of the children to be shared in the group. I sat down together with them to be able to listen to their thoughts and reflections. My purpose was to listen to what they need so I can be able to challenge them in their learning process, to be able to offer materials they might need. My aim is to give suggestions but also to encourage the dialogues between the children. In this situation I used pen and paper to document the ideas of the children.

What is evident here is that Astrid actually sees her role as to listen (as previously stated) and reflect so that she can challenge the children and offer materials that they may need to support their learning. Similarly, Astrid ranks 'the different languages of children' as an important priority in relation to her practices, which are congruent with and influenced by the pre-school setting as a whole, and by Reggio Emilia, which views children as 'rich' and competent. This is reiterated on the Swedish pre-school website (2020):

> We have developed a close collaboration with pre-schools in northern Italy where educators, managers and politicians exchange experiences.

The Swedish pre-school website (2020) also cites the Municipality of Goteborg's Stadt (2020) and the Swedish Pre-School Curriculum (Lpfö, 2010) which set out how they work with all preschools as a place for democracy and participation.

Emily notices this in her reflections:

> I liked the way that before the children started their day, Sebastian was able to look and talk about his picture.

Astrid uses Sebastian as a model, which is also part of the key thinking behind the Swedish Pre-School:

> Everyone should be given the opportunity to participate and contribute to the preschool's development.

Children are viewed as equal participants and valued and respected as having a voice within the Swedish pre-school; this will now be considered in more depth in relation to the rights of the child.

6.12 Part Two – Rights of the Child

Throughout the observations, interviews and video footages, the 'rights respecting' nature of both settings was evident. This is exemplified in Emily's story one footage:

> In the video you will see that Eddie is an inspiring little boy who kept trying, was involved and concentrating and achieved what he set out to do.

A similar statement citing the importance of the rights of the child came from Astrid, who says in the context of story three:

> By being close and encouraging Joline, by asking questions and challenging her, I could create a moment of reflection. By this, she could succeed and she even wanted to continue the process, and we did.

The English teacher then reflects on how Astrid uses lots of eye contact and how she found her ability to listen and value the children's thinking inspiring. Emily reflects how:

> To have his physical work blown up for all his friends to see, and the opportunity to talk about it gave him both recognition for his work and a clear message that they value it and what he has to say about it. Which I believe in turn encouraged others to try that day. I will do this when we are in the new building, and have the smart boards.

Stage three of the research process therefore has been a transformative process for the English teacher. Emily is now going to spend more time with individual children and use interactive whiteboards to display children's work so they can evaluate and discuss this with their peers. She also reflects on her practice and says:

> When I think back to my practice as a student, and at the start of my career and who I am now, my values have definitely changed.

Emily concludes with consideration of the wordle (ranking of her values) which:

> Shows where I am at now, the bolder and bigger being more important. What I have learnt is that the more experience you gain as a teacher, the less it becomes about you and the more it becomes about each child you teach. You think less about the processes of teaching, because they become innate. It is a bit like driving; initially it is about the function and order of the driving. You are so focused on the clutch point, changing gear, looking in the mirror, and getting to your destination that you do not notice the journey. Now I not only see the journey, but I relish it, I enjoy detours because the way I thought it was going to go is not the road my children wanted to take. These words support how both I and the children I teach get the most out of their journey.

Emily demonstrates that not only does she hold firm values but that she is now more able, due to her experiences and knowledge, to put them into practice. Rather than focussing on the process of teaching she focuses more on the needs and interests of individual children and their unique journey. This is in stark contrast to the literature which exposed how children are being prepared for next steps and 'dragooned' through the English education system through a 'top down' curriculum (Lubeck, 2000, in Penn, 2008).

Both teachers respect the rights of the child, and this is an underpinning value of both pre-schools' whole setting ethos and pre-school curricular aims; their values have perhaps been shaped and influenced by this. For example, the setting's aims in the English pre-school website (2020) state:

> Children's rights thread through our school ethos and culture, developing children's understanding of their rights and the rights of others.

The Swedish setting similarly uses its welcoming page to advocate for the rights of children:

> All children have the right to a safe and stimulating environment, free from discrimination and abusive treatment. We work actively for the equal rights of the children and to counteract all forms of abuse. If you want to know more about how we work with equal treatment and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, please talk to preschool staff.
>
> (Swedish pre-school website, 2020)

However, the reality of the implementation of the pre-school curriculum in Sweden and England is arguably very different in practice. The Swedish pre-school website (2020) refers to the Swedish Pre-School Curriculum (Lpfö, 2010) thus:

> Here, the children receive support to develop based on their own needs. In a playful way, we take advantage of the children's curiosity and desire to learn. The children's interests, opinions and needs influence how we plan the education.

This suggests that the planning within the pre-school is based around individual children's needs, ideas and interests. The Swedish pre-school curriculum (Lpfö, 2010, p.5) in its fundamental values tells teachers that:

> Children in the preschool should not be unilaterally influenced in favour of one or other point of view. Education should therefore be objective, comprehensive and non-denominational. The approach of all those working in the preschool and the way they behave and talk about something affects children's understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations that apply in a democratic society. This means that everyone who works in the preschool is important as a role model.
>
> (Lpfö, 2010, p.5)

The Swedish pre-school curriculum perspective in relation to the rights of the child requires teachers to encourage children to express their opinions and to value and respect them. Swedish teachers are to be role models and should not influence children's views by being in favour of one or other viewpoint. The Swedish pre-school curriculum goals (Lpfö, 2010, p.13) also offer a broader perspective on the rights of the child and say that children need to be encouraged towards:

> Respect and understanding of the equal value of all people and human rights, and a growing responsibility for and interest in sustainable development and active participation in society.

Within an English pre-school curriculum context, the beginning of Development Matters (DfE, 2014b) does mention that children have rights, as spelt out in the UNCRC (1989, 1992), but there is no further mention of 'rights' within the entire document. Furthermore, the rights of the child are not mentioned at all within the EYFS (DfE, 2017). This was highlighted in

practice when Astrid reflected on Emily's video footage and, interestingly, commented that:

> We can see that the activities are prepared and well thought of. We noticed that the children communicate more with the teacher than with each other. In this video we perceive the teacher's focus on the individual children in the group. We ask ourselves if it is this way of teaching that has impact on the way the children communicate.

What Astrid has observed is that Emily has some activities prepared, focussing on individual children's needs rather than the whole group of children. The Swedish teacher compares this to project work and the work with the children in general; she highlights how important it is to reflect, review and evaluate what the children do as a collective, based on their learning, interests and the environment. This is also consistent with field notes and observations, as Astrid discloses:

> In this way we are continuously making progress and it also keeps us updated with society and recent theories.

Astrid summarises Stage three of the data collection process by concluding:

> I believe that it is important. It has to do with preschools and schools as places where we learn how to live and learn together as a democratic education. Therefore, I also want to add the word democracy as an important value to the list.

In the English pre-school, children's rights are perhaps compromised with more structured activities and fewer opportunities for children's learning and peer conversations. This links to the role of the adults, their presence in

engaging in children's activities, and in the relationships that develop children's learning. These will be considered next.

6.13 Part Two – Relationships

When looking at the two teachers' reflections on each other's practice in terms of relationships, it is evident that both teachers value the importance of children's holistic development. They believe in developing strong parental relationships and in children learning from their peers. Both teachers said 'parental relationships' were of high priority in their practice in their ranking of values.

The Swedish and English pre-school curricula make several references to learning from home and taking on board parental perspectives and home language and learning cultures. Home learning cultures shape and develop the whole child and are a fundamental part of the relationship between the pre-school setting and home. It could be argued that there are different home culture expectations and affordances in Swedish and English pre-schools and in the extent to which pre-schools take on board children's social and cultural values. The Swedish pre-school curriculum (Lpfö, 2010, p.19) says:

> Children and parents should participate in evaluation and their views are to be given prominence.

This echoes the idea that:

> In cooperation with the home, the preschool should promote the development of children to become active, creative, competent and responsible people and members of society.
>
> (Lpfö, 2010, p.19)

As part of the pre-school curricular goals, 'Pre-school and Home' suggests that:

> In order to create the best possible conditions for children to be able to achieve rich, versatile development, the preschool should cooperate in a close and trusting way with the home and collaborate with the home.
>
> (Lpfö, 2010, p.20)

This demonstrates that the Swedish pre-school curriculum values children's home cultures and parents' contribution, not only to the development of individual children but to the pre-school and the community they live in as a whole.

The English pre-school curriculum (EYFS) (DfE, 2017, p.32) makes several references to children's home languages and valuing parents:

> Providers must make information available to parents and/or carers about how the EYFS is being delivered in the setting and how parents and/or carers can access more information.

Development Matters (DfE, 2014b, p.2) says:

> Children learn and develop well in enabling environments in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and

> there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.

Although the English pre-school curriculum mentions parents and home cultures several times, this is in reference to health and safety and the development of individual children through enabling environments. There is no mention of home cultures in relation to parents' contribution to the pre-school environment or the community in which they live, unlike the Swedish pre-school curriculum.

The Swedish setting ethos in relation to home cultures again reflects the influence of Reggio Emilia in working in partnership with parents, and the relationships that children have on a daily basis in pre-school. In Reggio Emilia the environment is described as the 'third educator'. This approach means that the environment should promote relationships, communication and collaboration by means of exploration through play (Gandini, 2005). This is evident in the Swedish pre-school website's (2020) aims, which talk of collaborative learning:

> There are plenty of opportunities for play, both individually and in groups. It is built on the basis that the children can meet and learn together in different stations and activities.

Also:

> Children explore and learn together with other children, [and] adults and in environments and contexts where they are challenged and test their abilities.
>
> (Swedish pre-school website, 2020)

The Swedish teacher's values in relation to relationships have been influenced by the Swedish pre-school curriculum which is founded on the idea, observable in practice, that children, adults and the environment are of equal importance in nurturing young children's learning and development.

This resonated in some respects with the English teacher's values as well. Emily ranked a 'skilled caring practitioner' as a high priority in her practice, and this idea is linked not only to the children but also their parents. Like the Swedish pre-school setting, the English pre-school setting's aims state:

> Children's personal, social and emotional development is central to their learning and we support this through the development of positive and caring relationships.
>
> (English pre-school website, 2020)

Emily clearly values children's home cultures, and was observed sensitively supporting and talking to parents about personal issues. Her values are arguably even stronger than the English pre-school curriculum advocates. The English pre-school website (2020) and Emily have an ethos of 'getting to know' individual children. Children are attached to a key person and put into family groups (the same size 'families' as in the Swedish pre-school setting).

The English setting ethos states the importance of parental relationships in its aims:

> We believe that education is a partnership between home and nursery school. We want to work together to make sure that your child enjoys their time at nursery school and achieves their best.
>
> (English pre-school website, 2020)

Emily and Astrid both value children's home learning cultures and the importance of developing relationships with parents. For the English setting, this is based predominantly on individual children, whereas, for the Swedish teacher, it is about how parents and the community can support individual children and also the pre-school setting as a whole and its environment.

6.14 Part Two – Learning Environment

In part one of these findings it has already been established that the learning environments of the Swedish and English pre-school settings look very similar in terms of the layout, different areas of learning, quiet spaces, tables, art areas and outdoor space. The teachers both commented on this when watching the footage of each other's videos – they were both surprised that the layout was so similar. However, when exploring the pre-school curriculum and the environmental context in terms of 'lifeworld' and 'interpersonal plane', some differences became apparent. The Swedish pre-school curriculum (Lpfö, 2010, p.10) makes several references to the importance of the environment:

> The environment should be accessible for all children and inspire them to play together and to explore the world around them, and support the children's development, learning, play and communication.

The Swedish pre-school curriculum also refers to the environment in the pre-school as offering varied activities in different contexts, with children aged three to four having several activities to choose from to broaden their playing patterns. This was observed in the Swedish setting and also written in field notes. The Swedish pre-school curriculum says it is the responsibility of everyone who works in the pre-school to ensure that the environment provides the conditions to extend experiences and opportunities for children. Furthermore:

> The environment in the preschool should inspire and challenge children to broaden their abilities. Play should play a central role in the education. An approach by everyone who is part of the work team and an environment that encourages play confirm the importance of play for children's development, learning and well-being.
>
> (Lpfö, 2010, p.10)

In terms of the findings of this study and of the underpinning pedagogy of the English teacher, Astrid reflects, reviews and evaluates children's learning and the environment. The Swedish pre-school curriculum further says:

> Children should be given time, space and peace for their own creative activity. They should have the opportunity to explore, reflect on and describe their environment.
>
> (Lpfö, 2010, p.12)

Subsequently, when Astrid engages in reflection on her own practice after watching Emily's video footage, she says she would like to add something about the environment to her values:

> I would probably add something about well supported and trusted environment for the practitioner [and] achievable shared visions and beliefs from practitioners and management within the school ethos.

What this suggests is that Astrid values the environment as a key aspect of her role, and it is important that she is trusted as a professional to set it up on the basis of a shared vision with other professionals and leadership within the pre-school. She has, arguably, been influenced by the Swedish pre-school curriculum which actually postulates that the environment is the responsibility of all pre-school professionals, as well as providing well-resourced and stimulating 'support' for children. The English teacher, Emily, comments on Swedish video story three in relation to the environment and says:

> This is one of my favourite parts of the video. I am striving for my children to develop the skill of being self-critical, and able to reflect and improve on their work. This is a simple and great way of doing it. It is clear from this video that this is not the first time that this has been done. The skill has been developed over time, and it is so rewarding to see how well the little girl does it.

What is evident here is that Astrid and Joline collaborate and work together, with Astrid following Joline's interests through providing space, time and resources in the 'atelier'. This opportunity enables Joline to have free choice and control over her environment and where her learning goes next.

The idea of enabling environments is a feature of the EYFS (DfE, 2014b) and is described as the way in which a child engages with other people and their environment. The DfE (2017, p.6) acknowledges that:

> Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

The EYFS (DfE, 2017) further identifies that the pre-school environment in English pre-schools needs to provide stimulating resources which are relevant to children's cultures and communities, as well as offering rich learning opportunities. This is similar to the Swedish pre-school curriculum.

When Emily reflects on Astrid's video, she thinks about the learning environment which she provides within the English pre-school setting and says:

> I hadn't realised the importance of being able to work with my children in a different role. Although they still see me as their key worker, not leading allows me to have a different perspective of my children, allowing my assessment to have another dimension, and almost to take myself out of the equation when assessing.

It could be said that the English teacher values and recognises the importance of the Swedish teacher being able to sit back and observe the children in a more informal and purposeful manner. In Sweden, it is the environment and teachers that are assessed, whereas, in England, it is the

children and their development. This is further exemplified in the Swedish pre-school setting where a ‘pedagogista’ is attached to all pre-schools, whose role is to look at patterns of similarities in terms of quality whilst recognising the need to value the uniqueness of children and settings, rather than adopt a ‘one size fits all’ approach. This could be seen as a stark contrast to the English setting’s evaluation of the environment through children’s end of year Foundation Stage Profile results (DfE, 2019). As the literature review revealed, the problem is perhaps not the EYFS curricula but a ‘top down’ pressure as English practitioners have to report on children’s progress through a data inputting system which enables local and national comparisons (DfE, 2019). This can put early years practitioners into compromising situations which conflict with their values and leave them with concerns about taking a ‘risk’.

Reflecting on the welcome time element in Astrid’s video, Emily says, based on the video and her subsequent conversations:

> I know that Astrid usually lets another member of staff ‘lead’ the welcome time.

She then relates this to her own practice and the environment which she provides, thinking of ‘story one’ in her video footage:

> It made me reflect on my forest school session where Erin [the pre-school outdoor co-ordinator in England] led the session and I supported.

What is interesting here is that Emily reflects on her changed role during forest school time and thinks that perhaps forest school is an opportunity for her to get more involved in the children's learning, following their interests and ideas through a free flow environment.

Part 2 – Stage 4 Community Plane/System

Stage four includes an exit interview with the English and Swedish pre-school teachers, asking them to reflect on and share the whole experience of being filmed in a 'day in the life of' video and their reflective dialogue regarding their practice. This is linked to Research Questions Three and Four in relation to how the teachers' values relate to national policy and curricular guidelines and what has been revealed from comparing them. Thus, Stage four will look at the broader, societal aspects which have impacted upon their values.

In relation to making cross-cultural comparisons, the literature demonstrated that, as stated by Kubow and Fossum (2007, p.505), "comparative inquiry often leads to an examination of the role that education plays in individual and national development. It encourages us to question our education system and to examine how societal values influence our attitudes toward how we educate." This reflects the purposes of this research in which two teachers were asked to reflect on their individual practice and each other's practice, in the hope that this would draw attention to national level influences in relation to policy and curricula. However, it is acknowledged

that this investigation recognises that the two teachers are situated within a socio-cultural framework. Their values and their practice are informed by the society in which they live and have trained as teachers, as illustrated in Figure 2.2. The conceptual framework developed for this investigation looked at the bridging necessary in comparing pedagogy, pedagogical practices and values, and how these are politically, societally and culturally situated.

Subsequently, the literature revealed that values help to determine the formation of a teacher's character, and when a teacher actively engages with these innate values they can begin to understand the implications for the choices they make and their attitudes and responses in relation to their teaching practices (Hawkes, 2013). Likewise, Habermas' (1987) 'system' perspective advocates that values can be understood as an effective 'forming' or shaping of the child in a given direction. Moreover, Habermas (1987) believed that this direction is outlined and formulated as goals in curricular guidelines. He also proposed that curricular guidelines not only advocate a reproduction of specific values but might also contribute to new experiences that can reconstruct ideas concerning values. This is linked to the underlying assumptions that teachers will have, and the idea of 'explicit' or 'implicit' values, as proposed by Brookfield (2017). This is apparent in the English teacher's reflection that she has now moved jobs and is working in a pre-school situated within a primary school in England:

> Since moving back to a primary school, the pressures of government priorities and values have had a huge impact on the quality of my teaching within the early years.

The English teacher's values are aligned to the principles underpinning the EYFS (DfE, 2017), and she has now reconstructed her values based on this new experience in an early years provision within a school based setting. Prompted further, she says:

> I have found myself doing things for the sake of Ofsted and policy rather than what is best for the children and the health of colleagues. I have to do an obsessive amount of observations that are expected to be carried out per child per week.

She exemplifies her frustrations further:

> They have [the government] raised the expectations to something that is not possible for the majority of children. This as a practitioner throws me into a tricky situation. I have high expectations for my children, but not impossible. I am experienced and confident enough to know what is achievable, and the best way to do this. I have been pressured into performing 'taughts' which are one size fits all lessons where I talk at the children. They are old and outdated.

Wood and Hedges (2016, p.387) agree and bring to the surface critical questions in relation to education policy across different countries. They identify three key issues: curriculum content, coherence, and control. Wood and Hedges (2016) look at this from two perspectives: the first focuses on the influence of development and educational psychology within early childhood education (ECE); the second focuses on how contemporary policy frameworks have selected key concepts from these. Wood and Hedges (2016, p.388) claim that these two perspectives "embody contrasting ontological assumptions and discourses ... taking a different view of what

curriculum comprises in ECE, what informs curriculum decision making and what and whose form of knowledge or content are valued." Thinking of Emily's comments, these positions create an intersection and a pedagogical dilemma between her values and how and what she chooses to teach three and four-year-old children. This suggests that her values are being compromised, and she relishes the fact that she was in a nursery school which focussed on where children are at now rather than where they need to be. This reflected her underpinning values more closely, and those aligned with the EYFS (DfE, 2017):

> The learning I provided at the nursery school was the best it possible could be. I knew where each of my children were and where their next steps were. They were given practical exciting play-based opportunities to learn more. Their well-being and interests were key in our practice.

As reported by Moyles and Worthington (2011, in Rose and Rogers, 2012, p.48), when carrying out a small study in reception classrooms, it was found that "whilst the rhetoric of the EYFS is strongly in favour of play and meaningful activities for children, few teachers appeared able to sustain this in their pedagogy and practice." Although Emily was still based in a pre-school class, this was situated within a school, and it is clear that she felt a pressure to promote more formalised activities, with 'school readiness' and 'top down' pressures which are against her values and the principles within the EYFS (DfE, 2017) and DAP (NAEYC, 2009). This also resonates with what Ball (1997, p.258) refers to as 'policy enactment' and the fact that "policy-makers do not normally take account of the complexity of policy enactment environments and the need for schools to simultaneously respond

to multiple policy (and other) demands and expectations". Education policy-making in England in particular has been appropriated to 'raise standards', "and the role of the individual school, and indeed the local education authority, has been subordinated to and by these national policy imperatives" (Fielding, 2001; Fullan, 2003, in Maguire, Ball and Braun, 2010, p.547). It is clear that Emily, the English teacher, feels that her practice is being prescribed by central government, and she feels accountable and responsible for children's progress. Moss and Petrie (2002, p.51) refer to the process of 'atomisation' in England and how it is sustained and reflected by the 'ever growing' numbers of government departments and other public agencies which "find interest in the child as a means to pursue their particular goals". The authors further elaborate, claiming that "these interests in school age child care services are, in practice, separate … stakeholders focus on the child in different ways each in the light of their different value systems." Teachers' work in England is increasingly viewed and evaluated solely in terms of output measures – for example, how well a school or teachers perform in an Ofsted inspection or where the school is positioned in league tables in relation to Standardised Attainment Tests (SATs). Arguably this leaves limited space for reflection, evaluation and an innovative and creative approach to the curriculum. It is something that Emily is clearly struggling with; she will be required to implement the EYFS profile (DfE, 2019), as this is the assessment tool used to predict children's SATs results at age seven and eleven. The English EYFS profile assessment (DfE, 2019, p.9) has to be carried out in the final term of the year in which a child reaches the age of five. According to DfE (2019), the

main purpose of the EYFS profile is to provide a reliable, valid and accurate assessment of individual children at the end of the EYFS. In accordance with the statutory EYFS framework, each child must be assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals and three Characteristics of Effective Learning. These are reported to local authorities in England. A child's attainment is recorded as 'emerging', 'exceeding' or 'expected'. Emily confirms:

> I have been fortunate enough to have worked in a nursery school, which has a very different ethos to a primary school. The focus is not on where the children will be the year after or more worryingly in year 6. The focus is on where the children are at now, and what their next steps are, and how we will achieve this.

This statement clearly articulates that Emily is more concerned with the process of children's learning than next steps, resonating with children's development and learning prevalent in the EYFS profile assessment (DfE, 2019).

On the other hand, Lohmander and Pramling Samuelson (2015), reflecting on the Swedish pre-school curriculum (Lpfö, 2010), say that it is underpinned by a socio-cultural and experience-based approach, where children are seen as active participants in their own development and learning. They also say that democracy is the underpinning value, although the curriculum specifies overriding goals and tasks but not the means to reach them. This is echoed by the Swedish teacher in this research. Interestingly, when Astrid was asked during the exit interview in Stage four if she felt that her values have ever been compromised, she said 'No':

> Yes of course I can carry out my values.

Additionally:

> I have a pre-school curriculum, which tells me to do this.

Astrid went on to say:

> In Sweden we have a pre-school curriculum which tells us expected goals but it doesn't tell how to do this. We are just left to get on with the job.

Astrid feels empowered and confident to teach and assess her children in the way she believes is the most effective. It could be argued that her values are heavily influenced by Swedish policy and curricula which promote democracy and socio pedagogy (which, as previously stated, is linked to Habermas' (1987) system perspective). According to OECD (2004), in Sweden the early years are seen as a broad preparation for life and the foundation of lifelong learning. There is also "a focus on the agency of the child, including respect for the child's natural learning strategies and the extensive use of listening, project work and documentation with young children" (OECD, 2004, p.6). Social pedagogy is renowned for focussing on the well-being and learning of the child. Watching the English video, Astrid observed that:

> We see that in both contexts, we want to focus on processes, but in very different ways.

This implies that the processes behind the pedagogical strategies used are different. This is inevitably connected to the teachers' values which are in turn connected to the individual and social beliefs to which they attach special priority or worth (Hill, 1991). Astrid, having read Emily's values and after seeing her video, observed:

> We find it very interesting that the reflections and intentions of our way of teaching are much more similar than what we see in the videos.

Astrid felt that, although their values carried similarities, when observed in practice they looked very different. For example, she refers to the fact that both teachers value a number of similar things, such as: 'a stimulating and well-resourced environment' which is 'accessible' to all, 'viewing children as having a voice' and 'rights', 'learning through play', valuing the 'whole child' as well as 'relationships with parents', teachers and children. But the ways in which these values are carried out in practice differ, as illustrated and reported on in Stages one, two and three of the findings. It could be argued that this difference is once more due to the social, political and cultural influences underpinning teachers' practice in England and Sweden. However, Astrid does not feel that her values have been compromised at all. Emily finally reflects on her values and her positionality in relation to her current job role within a primary school setting:

> Quantity over quality. If achieved it means that time spent with the children teaching and supporting learning is compromised, due to the demands of collecting data and information to support observations. What was an environment for valuing children and their contributions became an environment filled with adults hiding behind iPads, furiously collecting information?

> Adults stop listening to what is being said to them, in depth meaningful teaching cannot be achieved. I have had to follow meaningless schemes of work such as funky fingers and write dance, which are a one size fits all approach to teaching.

Several reports in the literature review concluded that:

> Countries need to take different approaches in designing their curriculum. Additionally, there is a need to think beyond curriculum dichotomies (such as academic-oriented vs. comprehensive approaches, and staff-initiated instruction vs. child-initiated activities) and consolidate the 'added value' of individual approaches. A focus on critical learning areas can facilitate customised curricula; and local adaptations of curricula in partnership with staff, families, children and communities can reinforce the relevance of ECEC services to local children and communities.
>
> (OECD, 2012, p.48)

This is echoed by Wood and Hedges (2016, p.388), who state that contrasting curriculum orientations or cultures comprise of "visions and practice; including assumptions about the needs and nature of learners, the role of teachers and instruction, norms about subject matter, learning environments, curriculum planning and evaluation". Pinar (2011, in Wood and Hedges, 2016, pp.388-389) supports this and suggests that this "presents a complex understanding of curriculum as drawing on multiple narratives and perspectives – personal, historical, social, cultural, post-colonial, political and ethical". What this suggests is that children, families, professionals and policy-makers are involved in making, living and experiencing the curriculum. Wood and Hedges (2016, p.389) say that, at a higher order level, content, coherence and control coexist in many ways

because they carry “historical and socio-political influences, values, cultural beliefs and aspirations”.

Conversely, Emily echoes what Lubeck (2000, in Penn, 2008) and OECD (2004) have found – that in the English education system:

> The early years ethos is not truly supported or even understood within a primary school. It is a long and difficult battle filled with contradictions. I have been given data to show that the new initiatives by the government mean that the expectations of reading and writing have risen. This has meant that the schools have changed their expectations of reading and writing for early years, so that it no longer follows Development Matters.

This is echoed in a publication by Ofsted (2017) entitled ‘Bold Beginnings’, which caused controversy in England for early years professionals who urged teachers to continue to base their practice on their professional knowledge of how young children learn best.

England's educational reform has happened very quickly, with government committed to quick results, in comparison to Sweden where there has been a gradual evolution of policy with extensive discussion and thought. Current public spending on children in England was due to remain at about £10,000 per child until 2019/20, the same level in real terms as it was in 2006/07 (Eurydice, 2020). Consequently Emily says:

> The school is so badly resourced that throughout the school there are no books. How can I read to my children let alone teach reading if there are no books? It is madness. Yet when these issues have been raised nothing has been resolved, other than me paying for books. I have chosen to leave this place of work, and schools for this reason. I am about to work

> within a private nursery, where I can be the practitioner I once was at the pre-school.

Additionally:

> The cut in funding to education has seen the quality of education decline, whether it is in lack of resources, staffing or even the closure of nursery schools. The Government do not value the importance of education, and the health and well-being of those doing the job.

Clearly, Emily demonstrates again that her values are being compromised by 'top down' pressures, and that her current practice is not aligned to her values, which has caused her to feel disillusioned and frustrated.

6.15 Conclusion to the Chapter

In summary, I will now reflect briefly on what can be concluded in relation to the study's four research questions:

:

1. What are the values of pre-school teachers in relation to the learning experiences that should be offered to children aged three to four?
2. What do teachers believe their role should be in enhancing the learning experiences of children aged three to four?
3. How do these values relate to local/national policy guidelines?
4. What is revealed by a comparison of teachers' values in Swedish and English settings?

It has been found that both teachers have a set of values and can identify these in a hierarchical manner. They have also benefitted from having the opportunity to be able to critically reflect on their 'best' teaching practice.

The teachers' values are personalised and 'situated' within their societal, political and cultural pre-school contexts. From the themes generated by the teachers as part of the data collection process, there are many similarities in their practice. For example, in relation to the teachers' values and their role (Research Question Two) and the pedagogical approaches to the curriculum which they adopt, there is an emphasis from both teachers on 'here and now' and on taking the opportunities to lead from the children and their experiences. Both teachers feel that children learn best within a stimulating and play-based environment where children have choice over their learning through child-centred practices, valuing the voice of the child (Research Question One). However, there is a dissonance regarding the purpose, meaning and processes behind how children learn (Research Question Four). It has been found that these differences are significantly influenced by the political and cultural rhetoric within their respective countries; this is particularly evident in the expectations regarding implementation of the curricula and assessment reporting linked to the local and national policy guidelines (Research Question Three). Conclusions drawn from the recording of the findings underpinned by the four research questions will now be reported in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Seven – Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction to the Chapter

This research explored with considerable nuance and depth the values of two teachers in an English and a Swedish pre-school by filming a 'day in the life of' video and asking them to reflect on their own and each other's practice. This chapter provides concluding reflections on the findings to address the four research questions:

1. What are the values of pre-school teachers in relation to the learning experiences that should be offered to children aged three to four?
2. What do teachers believe their role should be in enhancing the learning experiences of children aged three to four?
3. How do these values relate to local/national policy guidelines?
4. What is revealed by a comparison of teachers' values in Swedish and English settings?

This chapter will discuss the original contribution to knowledge and the recommendations for further study or change in relation to this investigation. I then identify key recommendations arising from the findings and reflections on the research process.

7.2 Conclusion to Research Question One

1. What are the values of pre-school teachers in relation to the learning experiences that should be offered to children aged three to four?

The two teachers in this study benefitted from basing their practice (and their values) on firmly structured theoretical positions. This is evident in their contributions and reflections on their positionality within this investigation as they presented at a national conference (BECERA 2018) and an international conference (EECERA 2018). These opportunities allowed each teacher to pick an aspect of her practice and reflect in even greater depth on one of her chosen 'stories' from her video footage. They also enabled the teachers to articulate and reframe their values, which they continued to do during the different stages of the research process. It is implicit that both teachers felt that they had 'shifted' their practice by taking part in this research which required them to reflect, read, think critically and analytically select their values. It also reengaged them with their respective national pre-school curricula and theoretical concepts and perspectives relating to their current practice and the learning experiences they provide in their pre-school settings. Sigurdardottir *et al.* (2019) highlight the importance of pre-school teachers having values based on their pedagogical practices, and the benefits of engaging in continuous pedagogical dialogue with peers, which is also a conclusion from this investigation. This also reflects both teachers' willingness to change and adapt their practice and to take on board new ideas relating to their teaching practice; it concurs with the views of Brookfield (2017) who suggests that teachers' underlying beliefs and values must be scrutinised through critical reflection. Brookfield (2017) refers to implicit assumptions which are harder to identify than the conscious assumptions which are on the surface of teachers' practice and easier to

articulate. This research also demonstrates that the teachers' implicit assumptions have become more explicit through dialogue and discussion. That process has also been exemplified and accelerated by using polyvocal ethnography as an approach within the investigation, linking back to the initial definition of values identified for the purpose of this study in Chapter One (Hill, 1991, p.26):

> When people speak of values, they are usually referring to those beliefs held by individuals to which they attach special priority or worth and by which they tend to order their lives. A value is, therefore more than a belief but it is also more than a feeling.

It is those values now identified by the two teachers as being of high priority which will shape and underpin their future teaching practice.

In relation more specifically to the learning experiences which the Swedish and English teachers felt should be offered to children aged three and four, there are many similarities. For example, both teachers ranked 'a stimulating environment', 'different areas', 'variety of resources' and 'well resourced, accessible and provoking environment' as important. Both pre-school environments looked similar in terms of having wooden furniture, natural materials and different areas of learning, as well as natural light and an open plan and free-flow. Both settings allowed children choice and valued the voice and the rights of the child; both were 'Rights Respecting' settings. Parental relationships and valuing children's home cultures were important aspects of both teachers' practice. They both provided a continuous provision environment which encompassed indoors and outdoors. More

specifically, the teachers ranked the outdoor environment among their values and both chose video footage which included the outdoors. They disclosed how they went outside regardless of the weather and how important this was for children's learning and development. The Swedish setting had a scheduled period of two hours outside after lunch time. All children had to go outside at that time, although there were other opportunities throughout the day if the children wanted to access outdoor provision. The English setting had no scheduled time for the outdoor environment but it was available throughout most of the day, generally accessed after a more focussed morning and afternoon teacher-led activity. As reported in the findings, this was similar to the Swedish setting and highlighted the similarities in the learning experiences offered, contrary to what the literature reviewed suggested.

In relation to the differences in the learning experiences provided for children aged three and four, both pre-school teachers exhibited similar values, although how these played out in practice was significantly different. For example, both pre-schools have outdoor forest school and 'wild areas'. In the English setting, these sessions were planned with a clear focus and delivered fortnightly by a trained 'forest school leader.' It could be said that these sessions were 'added on' rather than embedded in the learning experiences provided, and there was an ongoing focus and plan for each session. It could also be concluded that this is contrary to the intention of forest schools, as children should be given the opportunity to take risks, explore, swing and climb freely – although as Bertram and Pascal (2002,

p.32) say, “Given societal norms, what is appropriate for one nation may not be appropriate for another.” Sweden and England are situated within different societal, cultural and political structures which cannot be transplanted from one environment to another.

Similarly, there are significant differences in the way the environment is used to provide learning experiences for children aged three to four, in particular in relation to the intervention strategies used. For example, the English pre-school teacher provided more planned, structured activities and spent more time with the children in terms of physically interacting, although there were some episodes of spontaneity when following the children’s interests. The Swedish pre-school teacher, in contrast, observed, reflected and ‘stepped in’ with a stronger emphasis on ‘here and now’ to provide additional resources and support the children when she deemed this to be appropriate.

The process of learning is also different between the English and Swedish pre-school teachers, and although both teachers refer to children being immersed in activities and ‘involved’ and ‘engaged’, the English teacher talks about this in terms of next steps. This links to the EYFS (DfE, 2017) in ‘characteristics of effective learning’ and children ‘making connections’ between action and meaning. This was evident in a phonics session, for example, where children were deemed ‘ready’ for the next steps, echoing a constructivist approach (and the dominant discourse in early years pedagogy in England). In contrast, the Swedish teacher focussed on the children’s

interests in terms of incorporating their ideas as themes to work together with other children, through a project-orientated approach.

Finally, in terms of the layout of the pre-schools, both have been influenced by Reggio Emilia, as previously stated. This study has shown, however, that the ethos behind Reggio Emilia, such as listening to children, planning through the children's ideas, and 'project, plan and review', is far from the actual practice observed in the English setting, particularly in relation to the role of the adult. This will now be explored in conclusion to Research Question Two.

7.3 Conclusion to Research Question Two

2. What do teachers believe their role should be in enhancing the learning experiences of children aged three to four?

Both teachers have a variety of pedagogical strategies that they used throughout the pre-school day which were evidenced from the video footage and their expressed values. For example, both supported the children's learning through scaffolding and then were observed slowly 'fading away' so that the children could accomplish things by themselves, thus nurturing them to become 'independent' (Wood and Bruner, 1988). Also evident in both teachers' video footage was their engagement in reciprocal relationships using co-construction and open-ended questioning with the children. Vygotsky (1987) believed that communicative exchange with the social world shaped young children's cognitive development. The Swedish and English

teachers both also believed that children learn by connecting and communicating with others. For example, in their values they both ranked 'modelling', 'talking to children' and 'knowing the children' as important factors in their role as an adult in pre-school. In terms of the role of the adult, they gave equal priority to encouraging children to be 'involved' and focussed on their learning. The Swedish and English teachers provided a balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities which followed the interests of the children, as well as applying Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) principles. As revealed in the literature review, DAP views children as individuals but also within the social and cultural contexts in which they live (NAEYC, 2009). Therefore, it could be said that the English and Swedish teachers are applying aspects of a 'plural practitioner' with seven distinctive features of the adult's role in early years settings (Rose and Rogers, 2012). The seven areas consist of: the critical reflector, the carer, the communicator, the facilitator, the observer, the assessor and the creator. These are interactive and integrated together. Both teachers have developed caring, professional relationships with the children and their families (the carer) in their settings, and these featured in both teachers' ranking of values. They also spoke of children being 'rich' with limitless potential and a 'can do' approach (the creator), which Rose and Rogers (2012) refer to as 'interactional synchrony.' The teachers were 'attuned' to the needs and interests of the children and responded in a reciprocal way through mutual respect and empathy, as 'caring professionals'.

In relation to the differences concerning the role of the adult, the processes underpinning the purpose of the communication which the teachers have with children in this research are in stark contrast. The English teacher is a 'leader' and was seen physically interacting with the children and pedagogically intervening much more than the Swedish practitioner. The English teacher took ample opportunities to get to know the children to see where to take them next, and ranked 'extending learning' as a significant value. Unlike the Swedish teacher, she also ranked 'understanding child development' and 'expected stages' as important. Throughout the video footage, a number of interactions which the English teacher had with the children were heightened by intersubjectivity; this was demonstrated in the way in which she attached actions to the meaning of objects using a 'commenting approach' to extend children's knowledge and experiences. This resonates with a definition of pedagogy that is dominant in England which, according to Edwards (2000, in Cameron, 2006, p.9), "is about teachers being able to make informed interpretations of learners' knowledge and environments in order to manipulate environments … which helps learners make sense of the knowledge available to them."

In contrast, the Swedish teacher sees her role as an adult as significant but equal in importance to that of the environment and the children's peers. Therefore her role as an adult was more 'subtle'. She was more of a listening practitioner who engages with 'ethical encounters', giving the children the time and space to think and reflect. There is a focus on nurturing children's identity and ideas and growing their self-esteem. The

Swedish pre-school in this study reflects a socio-pedagogy, which aims to empower children as active citizens so that they can act to change their own lives (Bennett, 2004, in Sylva *et al.,* 2010); this has been revealed as the dominant discourse in Swedish pedagogy. This is also associated with the Reggio Emilia approach where the adult's role is not so much to talk, explain or transmit, but to listen. The Swedish teacher offers children ideas, responds to these, questions their thought processes, is open to their ideas and, as Rinaldi (2005) states, is 'a facilitator' – this is also one of the seven selves identified by Rose and Rogers (2012).

Both teachers ranked 'peers' in their values, but when exploring this further it emerged that they refer to this in a different way. The Swedish teacher refers to social learning and mutual respect for each individual's thoughts, and she also refers to grouping children together in terms of their competencies and ideas. The English teacher alludes to learning from more able peers; she refers to learning being enhanced in terms of language and cognitive development. This is again associated with a constructivist pedagogy and how children engage with the process of learning. However, it could be argued that although the dominant approach implemented by each teacher was different (Astrid a listening pedagogy, Emily a constructivist pedagogy), there was evidence in the video footage that both approaches were used by both teachers.

7.4 Conclusion to Research Question Three

3. How do these values relate to local/national policy guidelines?

An examination of the teachers' values, and how these have been shaped and underpinned by local and national policy guidelines, revealed some similarities between the two. In particular, both teachers implement a play-based curriculum which is reinforced by their overall setting and their respective curricular guidelines. For example, in both the Swedish and English settings the value of a pedagogy of play as a tool in developing children's learning is evident. Both teachers felt that children's creativity flourished through a play-based curriculum, as well as their holistic development through the provision of an indoor and outdoor environment. This was informed by the curriculum guidance in both countries (DfE, 2017, and Lpfö, 2010). There was shared commonality in the belief that children learn best through a play-based curriculum, where the adult engages in interactive roles with children to co-construct knowledge, promote challenge and support play that is both socially and conceptually complex. Both teachers felt that children needed to make 'new meanings' and 'connections' and be 'challenged' through the curriculum provided. Likewise, the teachers felt that children's learning through play needed to be articulated and documented, as set out in the pre-school setting aims for the pre-school curricula in Sweden and England. Similarly, both teachers valued the importance of children in their home contexts and emphasised the importance of parental relationships, saying these are vital in supporting children's learning. This is echoed in the whole setting policies in Sweden and England and again reiterated in the Swedish and English pre-school curricula. Several examples were articulated in terms of how both settings variously engage parents through online learning tapestries, parents'

evenings and events, and invitations for parents to support different celebrations and activities throughout the year. Other important factors in the teachers' values included the way in which children form relationships with professionals and their peers in the pre-school setting, which link to local and national guidelines. Likewise, the idea of children having family groups, a key worker and a sense of belonging to the pre-school were a high priority in both teachers' practices.

However, despite similarities in curriculum ideology, the English teacher, when reflecting on local and national policy guidelines, revealed that some of her values are being compromised. She feels that government priorities are impacting on the quality of her teaching. In particular, she feels that she has to implement activities to satisfy Ofsted and government policy, rather than do what is appropriate to enable young children to learn, based on her values of what early years practice should look like. The English teacher is 'living a contradiction' (Whitehead, 1989) and is in a professional dilemma. As Wood and Hedges (2016, p.388) stipulate, "There is a difference or an issue between curriculum decision-making and what and whose form of knowledge or content are valued in educational policies across different countries." The English teacher feels that she is experienced and knowledgeable enough to be left 'to get on with the job'. This resonated with the Swedish teacher who feels that her values are not compromised at all by local and national policy guidelines. She feels that the goals of the Swedish pre-school curriculum are something to strive for, but not necessarily to achieve; as a professional, she is left to implement the pedagogical

approaches and learning experiences which she feels are appropriate. The Swedish teacher's values have been highly influenced by Swedish policy and curricula, but she feels empowered and able to implement her values freely. This is evidenced in a comparison of the curriculum in England in 'Development Matters' (DfE, 2014b) which is a prescribed curriculum for professionals, and the loosely defined goals of the Swedish curriculum (Lpfö, 2010). This reflects Habermas' (1987) 'system' perspective, in that curricular guidelines and policy influence the way that adults 'shape' children in a given direction, including the role of the adult and the learning experiences provided.

7.5 Conclusion to Research Question Four

4. What is revealed by a comparison of teachers' values in Swedish and English settings?

When comparing the two pre-school teachers' overarching values, it can be concluded that they reflect many of the essential characteristics of an early years teacher (Edgington, 2004). This included both teachers demonstrating their beliefs in warm and empathetic interactions, responding with spontaneity to the children's interests, as well as analysing and reflecting on their role when working with pre-school children. Their values also revealed their commitment to reflect, be communicative and take responsibility when working with other professionals, children and their families. This was observed throughout the video footage and also through the data collection process. Both teachers also demonstrated an "optimistic disposition and 'can

do' approach and an in-depth understanding of child development and effective learning" (Moyles, 2001, p.82). The pre-school teachers' values reflected the importance of knowing the children individually; it was evident that they had developed intimate relationships with all the children in their family groups. They responded sensitively to the children's needs and viewed them in the context of their individual lives, homes and community settings.

When comparing the two teachers' values in greater depth, it can be concluded that they share several similarities in relation to the learning experiences that they provide and their role in the pre-school settings. Both pre-school teachers found it difficult to articulate their values. Emily and Astrid also both agreed that their values shifted and did not 'stand still' during certain situations, and that they used a range of pedagogical strategies throughout the pre-school day. Thus this research captured their values at a moment in time, resonating with Bernstein (1996) and his thinking regarding a 'pedagogic discourse' which can be moveable.

The similarities in their values were most evident under the theme 'relationships', where both teachers articulated the importance of developing positive 'parental relationships', 'bringing home into school' and 'peer learning'. When examining this further, the prominence of 'parental relationships' featured in the top half of both teachers' value rankings, and 'bringing home into school' featured towards the lower half. A more striking difference emerged in the theme 'relationships', where 'peers' featured in the

teachers' ranking. This was fourth in the Swedish teacher's ranking (out of thirty-six) but twentieth (out of twenty-eight) in the English teacher's ranking. It can be concluded that learning from peers is important to both teachers but has far more emphasis in the Swedish teacher's values (as previously discussed in conclusion to Research Question Two).

The teachers' values in relation to pedagogy and the role of the adult reflected further similarities. The exact same values were articulated by both teachers, including the importance of 'independence', 'reflection', 'modelling' and 'knowing the children'. However, 'reflection' was ranked seventeenth (out of twenty-eight) by the English teacher but second (out of thirty-six) by the Swedish teacher, although she added 'review and evaluate' to 'reflection' in her values which again is prevalent in the Swedish pre-school curriculum (Lpfö, 1998, 2010) and her pre-school setting ethos. It is important to consider, however, that the English pre-school teacher is referring to reflecting on her own practice, whereas the Swedish teacher is referring to reflection from the lens of the children and her own practice, hence her addition of 'review and evaluate'. This is echoed again in the Swedish pre-school curriculum, which refers to children being encouraged to discover, reflect on and work out positions on different ethical dilemmas, whilst the teacher's role is to develop children's ability to listen, narrate, reflect and express their own views (Lpfö, 1998, 2010).

Furthermore 'knowing the children' was ranked much higher by the English teacher. This could be linked to her role as a SENCO, as a high percentage

of children in the English pre-school have been identified as having special educational needs. This role requires her to work with other early years professionals and identify children's individual needs and interventions needed for them to thrive, learn and develop. In terms of the environment, it has already been concluded that both teachers believed in the importance of the outdoors for similar reasons, as identified in the conclusion to Research Question One. This is also the case for the theme 'rights of the child', where both teachers valued the voice of the children and felt that listening to children and allowing them time to think was important in their underpinning values.

It can be concluded that the teachers' values showed slightly less alignment in relation to 'how children learn'. Although they both believed in the importance of 'first hand materials', children learning 'holistically', nurturing children's 'social and emotional development', 'creativity', children being involved in 'purposeful learning' and seeing their world and the 'learning environment in different ways', the English teacher placed more emphasis on 'skilled caring practitioners', 'understanding child development' and 'the expected stages of development'. In reference to 'skilled caring practitioners' this could be linked to the English teacher's assumption about how she feels children learn best. This resonates with the thinking of Brookfield (2017), who believes that teachers' values are based on their own experiences as learners, how these are interpreted, and also what accepted research and theory says that they should be experiencing – and how we see children responding. The English teacher has been on a number of courses about

how to respond to children's language when referring to different objects, and how to extend their learning and 'stretch children's brains' in relation to their thinking skills through shared dialogue with others. This also links to another value, 'understanding child development', which would have been a key aspect of the English teacher's Early Childhood Studies degree and also her postgraduate teaching training qualification, as well as a key feature of the EYFS (DfE, 2014). This demonstrates that knowledge of where children 'are at' developmentally, how they learn and their unique interests, are high priority values for the English teacher. Similarly, knowing children's 'expected stages of development' is paramount for the English teacher as part of her role; the EYFS profile (DfE, 2019) statutory guidance requires pre-school settings to report on children's progress and to identify if they are 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding' in all areas of development. This emphasises the contribution that English educational policy and training have had in shaping Emily's values in this important respect. However, Emily has also used a variety of other influences through which to shape and form her values. Her own experiences of being a parent will have contributed, alongside the experience of observing and working with other professionals, working in a number of early years settings, engaging in continuous professional development, and learning from individual and family groups of children and their parents. All of these experiences have made Emily reflect more deeply in terms of who she is, how she feels children learn best, and also on her own beliefs and values regarding what effective early years practice looks like. Therefore, she now has the capability and confidence as a 'competent teacher' (Kelly, 2013) to have a strong set of values which she

can articulate, justify and carry out in her pre-school role. More importantly, she will now challenge and question her own and other professionals' practice and whether it is developmentally appropriate for children aged three to four.

Further analysis of the data suggests that the Swedish teacher attached greater importance to 'project work', 'reflect, review and evaluate', 'linking competences' of children, 'public spaces for learning', 'being part of community and society', 'different languages' and 'assessing through documentation'. It can be concluded that all of these values are reflected in key aspects of the Swedish Pre-School Curriculum (Lpfö 1998, 2010) and have also been influenced by key aspects of practice in Reggio Emilia. The Reggio Emilia philosophy is underpinned by a pedagogical approach which involves adults and children working together and sharing and testing ideas through open-ended project work. It also requires early years professionals to question and evaluate their own practice. The Reggio Emilia approach believes that children are born with a 'hundred languages' and that children should have the opportunity to express themselves in diverse ways that encompass their 'richness'. Reflective of Astrid's values is also the fact that the pre-school is a hub for the local community and that children are made 'visible' in public spaces. It could be suggested that her values have been influenced by educational policy in Sweden and, like the English teacher, Emily, linked to her training and continuing professional development. Astrid also draws together several of her experiences when articulating her values. These include being a parent, working with each family group and their

parents in the pre-school (from when children are aged one through to six), and engaging in dialogue with the 'pedagogista' and other pre-school teachers in the setting. The Swedish teacher also collaborates with other pre-school teachers in the local area and engages with continuing professional development at Goteborg University; she had also recently visited Reggio Emilia. These experiences will have all culminated in shaping and forming her underpinning values regarding her role and the experiences she provides for three and four year old children.

As a final summary in conclusion to Research Question Four, it has been established that the two teachers' values are arguably socially constructed and context-related. Though they may be fairly durable in nature, changing circumstances may influence the particular importance which they attach to particular values at particular times, and this study has captured (as previously mentioned) a snapshot of how their values become evident during a 'day in the life of' their practice. Finally, the findings echo Habermas (1987) who spoke of 'authentic knowing' leading to 'communicative capacity' and ultimately 'communicative action', where the aim is to transform thought and practice and thus make a difference to the way individuals communicate and engage in dialogue with each other. Habermas' (1987) thinking resonates with the findings of this investigation. It can be applied in relation to the two teachers engaging in discourse about values-related content (in terms of their role and the learning experiences they provide), and transacting practical and personalised values (which have been revealed through the data collection process). This experience has provided the two

teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their own and each other's values. It has also allowed for personal empowerment over their underpinning beliefs and the 'lived out' values observed in their daily practice (Habermas, 1987).

7.6 Recommendations for Further Study or Change

Using a wider sample of teachers could have been beneficial across both countries to add to the credibility of this study. It would also be beneficial to expand the study to include an 'expert group', such as Head Teachers and local authority leads in early years, to ascertain their views and experiences of pre-school teachers' values on a wider regional or national scale in both countries. Similarly, extending the study to include newly qualified teachers would allow an examination of differences and similarities in their values compared to those of experienced teachers. It would be interesting, insightful and potentially valuable to see if these values shift once they have been in practice for several years. It is a topic that warrants further exploration.

7.7 Contribution to Knowledge

First, it is important at this point to reflect that a PhD is about more than a contribution to knowledge. It is also about a student's ability to adopt systematic and rigorous research habits and reflections. This ability has been evidenced by my Professional Journal, which provides an audit trail of the research and my development (Appendix Nine). This PhD also marks a growing personal confidence in being/becoming an academic and scholar in the field, and the 'transferability' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) of that confidence

to others who may be in a similar position to my own job role as Principal Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies. The first contribution to knowledge is that I have developed an innovative and creative methodology by utilising several socio-cultural methodological approaches to ascertain two teachers' values. At the heart of this is the revisioning of Tobin and Hayashi's (2012) polyvocal ethnography. But this research went further by drawing comparisons in an evaluative manner, and this has allowed two teachers to share their 'voices' and to analyse and reflect on their own and each other's 'best practice'. The thesis has demonstrated the benefits of using video as a vehicle for capturing teachers' values, as well as engaging and empowering them to make meaning behind their everyday pedagogical practices and the learning experiences they provide for children aged three to four through polyvocal ethnography. I also present a framework as a second contribution to knowledge, entitled 'situated pedagogy', which has the potential to enable early years practitioners to identify their values by evaluating their everyday pedagogical practices and viewing these in the political, cultural and societal contexts in which they are situated. This therefore has value for ongoing research and for practitioners to continuously revisit their values and engage in 'transformative learning', as articulated by Mezirow (1997), as a third contribution to knowledge. This is where practitioners critically explore assumptions on which their interpretations, beliefs and values are based. Thus deeper critical reflection can occur when they are involved in communicating learning and self-reflection, linking to a praxeological approach where practitioners engage in shared, meaningful dialogue and have "reflected on, and in, human action" (Pascal and Bertram, 2012, p.479).

This thesis has brought to the surface the nuances, similarities and differences in the values and practices of two teachers in two different countries and the transformative nature of their reflections on these processes. In so doing, this investigation supports the importance of the early years sector in having a voice, and the need for educational policies to reflect the value of early years practitioners engaging and communicating in dialogue with others to enhance and continuously develop their practice. This will in turn nurture and promote early years practitioners in developing and articulating a clear set of values about the purpose and influence of their daily pedagogical practices and the learning experiences they provide.

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Appendices

Appendix One – English Pre-School and Swedish Pre-School Video Footage

Sent via Dropbox

Appendix Two – Setting/Manager Ethical Consent Form

Date: 13th/14th April 2016

Address: University of Wolverhampton, Walsall Campus, Gorway Road, Walsall, WS1 3BD

PhD methodology – Title: Exploring the Role of the Adult and Their Values When Working with Children Aged Three to Four Years.

Dear Manager,
I write to confirm our agreement that;

1. You hereby grant me the right during the period to enter onto the Property for the purposes of filming practitioner/s interacting with children and interview/s/discussion about the filming with the practitioner
2. "The Period" shall mean 13th/14th April 2016
3. All rights in the films, photographs and recordings made and/or taken by me at the Property shall vest in us and I shall be entitled to assign license and/or exploit the same by all means and in all media as I may at our absolute discretion elect. I shall be entitled to refer to the Property by its true name and shall have no obligation to you to include any or all of such films, photographs, recordings or transmissions in any films or programme or to exploit the same or any film or programme in which the same are included.
4. This agreement shall be freely assignable by us and shall be interpreted in accordance with the laws of England and Wales.

Kindly indicate your acceptance of the foregoing by signing and returning to me the enclosed duplicate of this letter.
Yours faithfully

Read and agreed by

Name:_____Name of research/filmmaker:_____

Signed:_____signed by researcher/film maker:_____

For and on behalf of
YOUR ORGANISATION _____

Appendix Three – Practitioner Ethical Consent Form

DATE: 13th /14th April 2016

To: Faye Stanley

Title of research: Exploring the Role of the Adult and Their Values When Working with Children Aged Three to Four Years.

Dear Faye,

In consideration of your arranging to film and record my contribution to be given by me to you on 13th/14th April 2016 I agree to the recording of my contribution and hereby give to you all consents necessary for the reproduction, exhibition, transmission, broadcast and exploitation of my contribution in the Programme without time limit throughout the universe by all means and media (whether now known or hereafter discovered or developed) without liability or acknowledgement to me.

You shall be entitled to cut and edit the interview and other sequences as you deem fit and you shall not be obliged to include all or any of the material in any programme.

Yours faithfully

(Practitioner's details)

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Tel. No.: _____

Signed by film maker/researcher: _____

Appendix Four – Parental Ethical Consent Form

I am a PhD student at the University of Wolverhampton and The Centre for Research in Early Childhood and, as part of PhD methodology, I am producing a short film to demonstrate the role of a practitioner in your child's setting. It will be used at early years conferences and will be shared with other practitioners in the early years field and with academics involved in the production of my PhD.

Your child's setting has agreed to help with the making of the film and this form is being sent out to seek your consent for your child to take part in filming and feature in the finished materials.

Name of child: ……

Your Name: …….

Status (eg parent, guardian) ……

Home Address:
……

……

…….....

Home Tel No: ….……

I agree to the above taking part in filming at ********** Nursery as part of a PhD study from Wolverhampton University. I consent to the full use of the material in any media, whether already known or yet to be invented, throughout the world, in perpetuity.

I understand that the copyright of any material generated as a result of any filming rests with Wolverhampton University.

This agreement is governed by the laws of England and Wales.

Signed: ……..

Date: ……..

Yours faithfully
Faye Stanley
(BA Hons, PGCE, MA Education)

Appendix Five – Setting Video Recorder Risk Assessment

RISK ASSESSMENT
PRODUCTION NAME: PhD methodology – Title: Exploring the Role of the Adult and Their Values When Working With Children Aged Three to Four Years.
FILMING DATE/S:
CAMERA:
Location: **To record:** **NEAREST A&E:** **First aider within crew: (name and mobile):**

HAZARD CHECKLIST

		Tick			**Tick**
1	Access / egress		26	Night operations	
2	Alcohol		27	Noise / high sound levels	
3	Animals		28	Practical fire / flame / flambeaux	
4	Any special prop under direct control of artistes		29	Radiation	
5	Audience safety / seating		30	Scaffolds / rostra / platforms / practical staircase / walkways on set	
6	Compressed gas/cryogenics		31	Scenery / flats over 12ft x 10 ft	
7	Confined space		32	Scenic/ set materials (toxic / fire retardant / glass)	
8	Derelict buildings / dangerous structures		33	Smoking on set / studio	
9	Diving operations		34	Special ‘flying’ / technical rigs	
10	Explosives / pyrotechnics		35	Special needs / children / elderly / disabled	
11	Fatigue / long hours / physical exertion		36	Special visual effects: rain / snow / fire / smoke / steam / dry ice / heat / rock fall	
12	Fire Prevention / Evacuation procedures		37	Scenery / props storage	

13	First Aid		38	Stunts / dangerous activities	
14	Flammable materials		39	Technical facilities (handhelds / camera cables / camera movement / jimmy jib / special cable runs / scanners / PSC / OBs etc	
15	Flying (aircraft, balloons, parachutes)		40	Vehicles / motorcycles / speed	
16	Freelance crews and contractors to be advised of safety procedures		41	Water / proximity to water / tanks	
17	General public – arrangements for safety		42	Weapons / knives / firearms	
18	Hazardous substances		43	Work at height: zip-up/ladders/telescope	
19	Heat / cold / extreme weather		44	Working on grid	
20	Heavy loads		45	Working / storage under seating	
21	L.P.G./ bottled gases				
22	Lasers / strobes				
23	Lifting equipment				
24	Live electrical equipment / tools				
25	Manual handling				

Hazard Number	**MAIN RISKS IDENTIFIED** (Describe risk and people affected. State if considered to be high (H), medium (M) or low (L) before any controls are introduced)	**CONTROLS TO MINIMISE RISK** Indicate the risk state after control initiatives are introduced. i.e. (H/M/L) Ensure person(s) responsible for taking action in the control procedure are named and a copy of this assessment is given to them.

COMPLETED BY: Faye Stanley
POSITION: researcher
SIGNATURE:
DATE:

I am satisfied that the above constitutes a proper and adequate risk assessment in respect of this production:
Setting Manager: POSITION:
NAME:
SIGNATURE:
DATE

Appendix Six – Exit Interview

1. After watching and reflecting on your video again, what are your final thoughts regarding your role and the experiences you provide?

- Is there anything you would change?
- Is there anything you would like to elaborate on?

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2. Looking again at the ranking of your values, have you got any final thoughts/reflections?

- Have your values changed or stayed the same?
- What has influenced these? (training, other professionals, courses?)

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3. When you think of (local/national) policy initiatives, what key values do you feel underpin these? (For example, municipality or local authority initiatives/the curriculum for pre-school children in England/Sweden)

- How/in what ways?
- Do these reflect your own values, do you feel?
- If so, in what ways/why not?
- Have there ever been occasions for example, when you felt your own values were different from government priorities and values? Can you tell me about that? etc

Appendix Seven – English Teacher Unstructured Dialogue

Sample transcript from 'story one' – 'Eddie'

Researcher: 'Tell me about this part of the video. Why do you think being outdoors is important for children'?
Emily: 'I love forest school as it is a time when I see our children trying things that they don't always choose to do. We do it as a key group and it is led by another adult, so I am there as a different role for my children. It is a time that I can sit back and observe and support my children in a way that I can't if I am leading a session'.
Researcher: 'And what do the forest school activities involve'?
Emily: 'The activities that the children are involved in are usually enchanting, and full of magic taking them to a fantasy world, whilst still giving them a purpose for their work, e.g. making a fairy/elf home, magical potions to make a poorly witch better, to find new creatures etc. this bit of fantasy motivates our children to think carefully about what and how they are working. We try to incorporate the Characteristics Of Learning especially during forest school.
Researcher: 'So why do you love forest school so much'?
Emily: 'My session with Eddie was a privilege to be part of. He is a really optimistic little boy, who has an amazing attitude to life and is inspiring to his friends and staff. Eddie's weakness in his hands does stop him from wanting to use both hands, and he will shy away from activities that require this, so to have him want to use the rolling pin was amazing'.
Researcher: 'You refer to yourself leading this session…'
Emily: 'When reflecting on the session, I do feel that I did a lot of talking, which makes me feel uncomfortable, did he have enough time to say what he needed to? We have a huge amount of SEN children and we are always being advised to by other professionals to use a 'commenting' approach when they are working. This enables them to be immersed in language and for them to make a connection between the action and its meaning. I wanted to Eddie to make sense of what he was doing, to know why he was doing it and essentially for him to assess how it was going himself, so that he could modify his actions and better them it if at all possible (I think by him

modifying where he put his clay is a good example of this). It is about giving our children the tools to be able to think critically, so that next time they can do it independently with greater success'.

Researcher: 'So you feel ensuring children reach their potential is important for children'?

Emily : 'Yes, I like to give meaningful praise, not just to say good girl/boy. I want to develop our children's growth mindset. I don't want them to think that they are limited by their intelligence, I want them to know that with the right tools their learning and success is limitless, nothing is unachievable. I reinforce their achievements by saying 'I like the way…' so they understand it is the process not the final result. As the session developed, I reinforced the process in which Eddie was working "I like the way you put it closer"'.

Appendix Eight – Swedish Teacher Unstructured Dialogue

Sample transcript from ‘story one’ – ‘Morning Assembly’

Researcher: ‘So how do you start the pre-school day and why’?
Astrid: ‘In the morning, we gather to start the day together with a (short) welcoming of all the children that have arrived. We use photos of them to talk about those who are present and those that has not yet arrived. Then we look back together on things that we have done earlier, on days before’.
Researcher: ‘So it is important to you that all the children are greeted and welcomed at the beginning of the day’?
Astrid: ‘We use the morning assembly as a platform for democracy, where the children have the possibility to be curious of each other, their different experiences and interests. By sharing their discoveries to others they get new ideas from the other children's knowledge and experiences. The children learn by each other by group collaborative learning’.
Researcher: ’So what do you see your role in this activity?’
Astrid: ‘Each child contributes to the group and the group contributes to each child. Working with participation of the children require a thorough planning, reflection and a strong collective idea. My role as a teacher is to plan, reflect and involve both colleagues and children in the activities. Sebastian had made the drawing the day before, and I asked if he wanted to share it with his friends. I had planned what material to offer the children to work with, inspired by Sebastian’s work.’In the video, Sebastian had made a drawing of Kusama’s houseboat. (Kusama is the Japanese artist that inspires us with patterns). Sebastian shows and explains to the other children what he has done and about his ideas of it’.
Researcher: ‘So the children listening to each other is important to you?’
Astrid : ‘Yes, the other children can share their thoughts and reflections on the subject. The children then get a task, from the ideas of the group, to proceed the work’.

Appendix Nine – Reflective Journal Entry

Date 18th Feb 2014 - Presented at BECERA Conference, Birmingham, 2014, PhD 'Methodological Thinking' – Title and Questions

I feel so much better now after presenting at the BECERA conference yesterday. My title needs revisiting based on the audience's comments as the feedback included: it needs to reflect that I'm interested in the role of the adult, why comparative? How am I going to incorporate 'leaning experiences' as that isn't clear at the moment? It doesn't quite reflect what I want it to at the moment in relation to the role of the adult being included. It needs to be sharper and more focussed. I want it to include the fact that I am interested in the experiences pre-school children have and what the adults see their role as being. I need to consider how many participants I will use and also what methods of data collection/s – that's going to take some serious thinking. I think I will volunteer to lead the next CREC 'Learning Circle' and put forward my new title and questions to engage in further professional dialogue. At the moment I have four research questions and I am thinking is that too many or not enough? I might take a look on the university's WIRE and look at what other PhD students' have used. Not sure really as never written a thesis before! I will also speak to Helen as I know she is struggling with her questions and title too. In fact I am so glad we presented together as it gave me the confidence to present on my own next time. I was worried that people would think my investigation was pointless but I did, I suppose, gain positive and constructive feedback – something I need to get used to and not taking these comments personally. I am going to start setting an agenda for my PhD supervisory meetings so I can ensure I have ownership over my thesis and also to make sure those queries get answered and I don't forgot. I am loving my PhD so far and now need to start researching for my literature review. When I began doing this last week, the word 'values', and 'values education' kept appearing so I need to research this further to explore what the differences are. Feeling excited and positive about this journey. I think I am going to go to the CREC research methods Masters sessions as no harm in going over stuff again and getting a different perspective.